

Mountain Lines

Vol.14, No. 9 Dec, 2008 Preserving Our Desert and Mountains www.mcdowellsonoran.org

Photography Exhibit *Focus on Conservation*

The Scottsdale Public Art program and the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy joined forces to bring the Preserve into the community. *Focus on Conservation* traveling photo exhibit opened at the Scottsdale ArtSpace at the Civic Center Library, Scottsdale Center for the Arts on October 8th, 2008 and ran through November 6, 2008. These photographs, all winners and honorable mentions of MSC's highly successful photography contest *Focus on Conservation*, illustrate the diversity and beauty of our Preserve. All photographs were taken last April during Get Out and Get In the Preserve Month.



Artist Name: Steve Powers
Category: Flora
Division: Amateur
(Winner-Category,
Winner in Overall-Best in Show)



Artist Name: James Hamilton
Category: Fauna
Division: Amateur
(Winner-Category)



Artist Name: Sue Cullumber
Category: Flora
Division: Professional
(Winner-Category, Winner in Overall-Best Color)



Artist Name: Virginia Wattles
Category: Landscape
Division: Amateur
(Winner-Category)

art space
@ the library



Artist Name: Lauren Brill
Category: Landscape
Division: Youth
(Winner-Category)



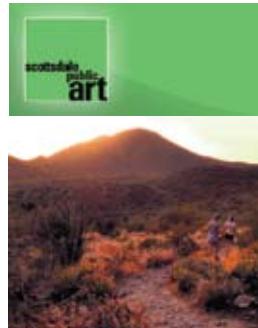
Artist Name: Annica Benning
Category: Flora
Division: Youth
(Winner-Category)



Artist Name: Justin Francisco
Category: Fauna
Division: Youth
(Winner- Category)



Artist Name: David P. Williams
Category: Fauna
Division: Amateur
(Winner in Overall-Macro)



Artist Name: Stephen Parsons
Category: People
Division: Amateur
(Winner-Category)

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This is the season of giving. It is when we celebrate our family and friends who enrich our lives. This year I encourage you to consider adding a new facet to that celebration – the environment. Just like family and friends, our environment impacts us beyond measure.

Current research indicates that the mere presence of a tree at your residence improves your impression of the quality of your life. I recently read a study that was conducted in two large inner-city apartment complexes. The only difference between the facilities was that one had a landscaped exterior, and the other didn't have vegetation of any kind. When surveyed, the people who lived in the complex with landscaping reported a higher quality of life, less domestic violence, and less crime. The results were so marked that the researchers repeated the study in another pair of complexes to see if the results would be the same. They were.

If having even the most passive interaction with nature can improve our lives, imagine the impact nature would have if we made a conscious effort to include it in our lives.

I am concerned about the impact the world's current economic troubles will have on our commitment to the environment. Unfortunately, green living is often more expensive and takes an additional step in our daily regimen. When we are economically stretched, extra steps and expenses are cut. However, now is the time to commit to culling non-sustainable practices from our daily lives. As noted by John Doerr, a green venture capitalist, "We can bailout the economy. We can't bailout the environment."

Here are a few things you can do this month to keep your focus on the end goal – a healthy, life-sustaining environment:

- Stop using the bags given to you at a store when making a purchase. The other day I purchased a new sweater and the sales woman began to wrap it in tissue paper. I asked her to keep the tissue paper and the bag, and then put the sweater around my shoulders. If you think of the bag as a former tree, it is a lot easier to say no!
- Take the extra time to go on a hike or ride in the Preserve. Don't let a hectic holiday schedule stop you from enjoying the rejuvenating effects from time spent in nature.
- Think about the amount of paper you are using during the holidays. Boxes, tissue, wrapping paper, cards, paper plates, and more. We use more paper during the month of December than the rest of the year combined. Instead, use our 100% recycled canvas totes as gift bags or the comics from the newspaper to wrap gifts. This way, you will be giving the recipient two gifts – the one wrapped in a cloth shopping bag and a healthy environment.

I ask you to consider this December a month-long celebration of nature. Please consider purchasing the green gifts found on page 9 as gift bags, hostess gifts, and as a message to show you care! It is up to every one of us to try harder to save our environment.

In thanksgiving,

Ruthie Carll
Executive Director

Feature Article

A Historical Perspective (continued): 1994 to 1999

About The MSC

The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy's commitment to the community is to champion the preservation of the Sonoran Desert and its mountains, facilitate the community's relationship with preserved land, and develop a culture of stewardship within the community. It is our goal to secure for future generations their unique environmental and archeological heritage.

Mountain Lines

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The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

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McDowell Sonoran Month, a creation of MSC and the City of Scottsdale, began in 1996. This month-long celebration originated as a way to bring attention to the Preserve and to the importance of preserving this community treasure, and also to maintain and increase public support. Building awareness of the fledgling Preserve was critical as the City began to implement the acquisition plan.

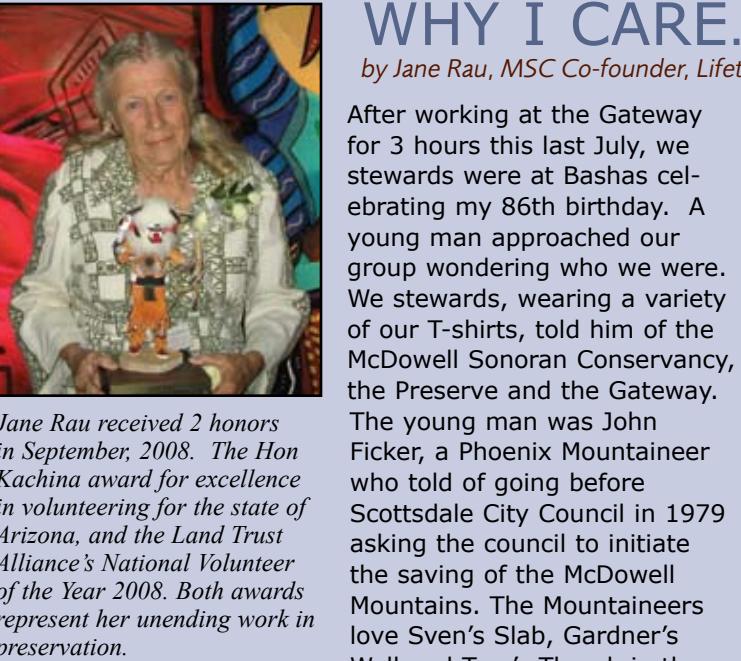
In 1997, MSC's Board realized that the organization had grown to a level where a staff person was needed and they hired Sandy Barr to be MSC's first Executive Director. Sandy, formerly with the Sierra Club, had substantial experience in advocacy and a strong network in the conservation community. During this period in the Preserve's history, advocacy was MSC's critical focus. Building Preserve awareness and creating a community that understood its importance was vital. Sandy was tasked with networking, promoting preservation, and working on state land issues.

Two important things happened in 1998. The recommended study boundary for the Preserve was expanded to include nearly 20,000 additional acres. This land was near access areas in the McDowell Mountains, as well as a large land area north of Dynamite Boulevard connecting to the Tonto National Forest and encompassing historic recreation areas. This area included Brown's Ranch, Little Granite Mountain, and very desirable land that could be developed for housing.

continued on page 5...

WHY I CARE...

by Jane Rau, MSC Co-founder, Lifetime Board Member and Master Steward



Jane Rau received 2 honors in September, 2008. The Hon Kachina award for excellence in volunteering for the state of Arizona, and the Land Trust Alliance's National Volunteer of the Year 2008. Both awards represent her unending work in preservation.

McDowell Mountains. The city of Phoenix already had their Phoenix Mountain Preserve, but the Scottsdale Council turned them down.

Many of us worked through the 90's for native plants, dark skies and natural area open space. Until we learned about land trusts in the spring of 1990, we could only appeal to the City Council. Tracy Connor of the Trust for Public Land was the featured speaker at the new Mustang Library to explain land trusts. It was Dudley Onderdonk, Scottsdale's long-range planner, who arranged for her to come from Santa Fe, New Mexico.

A group of us tried through the summer to get folks together. Finally coordinating our first meeting with the return

of Tracy Connor, we met again at the Mustang Library on November 17, 1990 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The following is the attendance sign-up: Anne Marsolo (member of Phoenix Mountain Preserve sent by her husband, Paul Diefederer, chairman of the Phoenix Mountaineers), Jane Rau (Scottsdale activist), Karen Bertiger (real estate and Scottsdale activist), Pete Chasar (Phoenix Mountaineers and graphic designer), Tracy Connor (Trust for Public Land), Stephen M. Jones (botanist, went on to teach MSC stewards), Mary Ann Driscoll (Scottsdale activist), Fred Davidson (Pinnacle Peak attorney that I had asked to attend in hopes that he would agree to represent us), Ralph M. Knight (chairman of Greater Pinnacle Peak Homeowners), Irene Habbo (Scottsdale activist), Marilyn Pawels (Nature Conservancy) and Mike Milillo (open space chairman, Mountaineer and Scottsdale planner, walking a tightrope in wanting preservation but presenting developers' projects). What a diverse group!

After introducing ourselves we knew we had a lot to accomplish. It was decided our purpose was to preserve the McDowell Mountains and surrounding Sonoran Desert. Next came the naming of the corporation. Eventually, McDowell Sonoran Land Trust was agreed to by all. Now we needed a lawyer to move on to the legal agenda. Fred Davidson agreed to be the lawyer for the organization, and explained that when it came to incorporators they became fiscally responsible for any debt. The monied were silent; those who had businesses were silent. Finally, I volunteered to check with my husband and Karen Bertiger joined me. That is how Karen and I backed into becoming co-founders.

MSC geology PROJECT...

By Dan Gruber, MSC Master Steward

It all began with a couple of rocks. Almost a year ago, McDowell Sonoran Conservancy steward and board member Len Marcisz presented his excellent talk about the Human McDowells at a Natural History course offering. During that talk, Len mentioned tool-making by archaic peoples in the vicinity of Lost Dog Overlook (sometimes referred to as Quarry Point) on the Ringtail Trail. He said that the tool-making rocks (pictures of which are shown below) had been identified as "tabular quartzite" in an archeology study of the area.



But these certainly didn't look like quartzite, which supposedly makes up most of the southern McDowells and which I'd also seen in mineral collections. I asked Len to borrow the rocks, took pictures of them, and sent the photos to research geologist Brian Gootee with the Arizona Geological Survey.

A number of MSC folks first met Brian when Conservancy preserve operations leader BJ Heggli arranged for Brian to lead us on a hike to the Marcus landslide in the northeast McDowells. Brian was one of the discoverers of this huge landslide that occurred about 500,000 years ago. Since Brian was the only practicing geologist I knew, I sent the photos to him in an email with an explanation of the context and my questions.

Brian agreed to meet me. He looked at the rocks and agreed that they probably weren't quartzite. In fact, he ventured that they might be greenstone—basalt (volcanic lava) that has been chemically and physically changed by heat and pressure. But this meant a couple of things. First, the archeological study could be wrong. Second, although existing geological surveys of the McDowells often refer to occasional greenstone intrusions in the mountains, they're not marked on the survey maps and nobody seems to have seen any.

This was intriguing, so I went out to Lost Dog Overlook. I rarely hike in that area. The times I've gone to the Overlook have been from the Lost

Dog Wash access area, but the closest parking actually is at 128th Street. So for the first time, I approached Lost Dog Overlook from the east instead of from the west. This is what I saw:



These lines of standing slabs are very striking. There's nothing like them on the west side of the hill. They form an inverted "V" on the east side of Lost Dog Overlook, and from the trail the area between the slab lines looks very different than the hillside on either side. When I examined some of the slabs up close (with permission from City of Scottsdale Preserve manager Claire Miller, of course), they were even more interesting.



The surface of the slabs is weathered to a uniform orange-tan—which looks a lot like quartzite! But if you look at the interior, which is visible at the left edge of the slab in the picture, you can see that it's black—and it looks just like the rock in the left picture at the top. Could this be why the archeologist thought the rock at the tool site was "tabular" (i.e. slab-like) quartzite? In any case, these slabs could mark one of the elusive greenstone intrusions mentioned in the geological surveys.

Interestingly, even though the rest of the McDowells was surveyed by the Arizona Geological Survey, the area around Lost Dog Overlook has not been done. So any description of that area would be new information. With approval from Claire and McDowell Sonoran Conservancy trail maintenance chair Joni Millavec, a geology project was added to the MSC monthly trail project list in hopes that other people also would be interested in exploring the area. A number of folks participated—led by Joni and MSC stewards Larry Levy and Bill Ruppert, who would become the backbone of our geology team—and we spread out and looked around. We found lots of the black stone between the slabs and even more green stone all over the rest of the hillside. After this work, I emailed Brian with more pictures, what we'd observed, and lots of questions.

Brian offered to come out and join us in the field. For a busy geologist, this was extremely generous of him. Brian spent hours with us at Lost Dog Overlook. He confirmed that the area is very interesting and complex geologically, gave us a lot of guidance about how to conduct a scientific study, encouraged us to develop an overall description of the area, and offered to stay involved. After further discussions with Scottsdale Preservation Division director Bob Cafarella, Claire, Joni, and Brian, we decided to embark on a research project to develop a preliminary geological survey of the area around Lost Dog Overlook.

Because this would be an extended research project in the Preserve, we wanted to do it appropriately and sensitively. We established a concrete goal: developing and publishing a preliminary geological survey of a defined area. The field work would be done by volunteers under Brian's overall scientific supervision. Experienced MSC stewards, in this case Bill, Larry, Joni, and I, would be the project leaders. There would be a series of geology projects approved by Claire and Joni, and scheduled so as not to interfere with any trail maintenance work. The work would have an educational aspect and we would use it to attract new people to field work. With these ground rules set, Claire issued a permit for the ongoing program.

Over the last 6 months or so, we've conducted about a dozen projects around Lost Dog Overlook and dozens of people have participated. At this point the field work is almost complete. McDowell Sonoran Conservancy volunteers have made hundreds of observations of rock types, locations, and physical characteristics; delineated boundaries between different kinds of rock; identified possible shear zones where major geological forces were at work; and collected representative rock samples (with permission) for detailed analysis. Larry, Bill, Joni, and I now are putting all the data together for another review with Brian, who has conducted periodic reviews of our work by email and in the field, and who continues to be an enormous help. Writing the actual paper, which will include producing a geological map of the area around Lost Dog Overlook (with help from City of Scottsdale Preserve trail manager Scott Hamilton), is the next big step.

So what have we learned? We know that Lost Dog Overlook is, geologically, a very complicated and unusual place. There's a tremendous amount of rock there that we haven't seen anywhere else in the Preserve, and the area seems quite different from the existing geological descriptions of the southern McDowells. The rock in that area seems to have been particularly useful for archaic tool-making. (If tools made from this unique rock turn up elsewhere, it might further elucidate ancient trade patterns.) There's been a lot of deformation in the vicinity; some rocks are finely layered, folded multiple times, and even visibly stretched. There's also been hydrothermal (super-heated water) activity there, which has caused major changes in some of the rock. There are multiple changes in the type of rock over short

distances. We think we can describe all these things fairly accurately. The final challenge, for which we'll depend heavily on Brian's help, is trying to explain what actually happened to produce this complex result and when it happened.

We've also learned that research in the Preserve can be fun and rewarding while being respectful of the environment. Working in partnership with the City of Scottsdale, research done under appropriate guidelines can expand involvement in the Preserve while also increasing our understanding of it. The geology work, for example, attracted a number of new people out into the field. It's certainly added to our knowledge of the Lost Dog Overlook area, and it's raised new questions about the overall geology of the mountains. Research also can provide a wonderful educational opportunity. In this case, the geology project participants were able to work with and learn from a practicing scientist. With City approval and oversight, we hope there will be more directed research work in the Preserve in the future.

When the work, the paper, and the map are done, look for the final installment of this story in a future edition of Mountain Lines. In the meantime, many thanks to the City of Scottsdale's Preservation Division for its continuing support and oversight; to Bill, Joni, and Larry for spending many long hours clambering over rocks with me; to all the other MSC stewards who have participated in this experiment in amateur geology; and to geologist Brian Gootee, without whose generous provision of ongoing guidance and active help this work wouldn't have been possible.

...continued from page 3

Then council woman Mary Manross was pivotal in getting the process started in 1996 and, through the Desert Preservation Task Force lead by Carla, saw this completed. This was an ambitious plan! These visionary leaders set Scottsdale on the path of creating the largest urban preserve in the country covering one-third of the community's geographic boundary.

Also in 1998, in partnership with Scottsdale Community College, MSC began a volunteer program to support the Preserve efforts of the City. Chet Andrews, a board member and one of the original individuals involved in the Preserve efforts, created a training program, established a volunteer leadership structure, and recruited both leaders and boots on the ground. Much of what MSC is today can be credited to Chet and his vision for managing the people-power needed to care for the growing Preserve. As "Steward #1", Chet's values of integrity and teamwork infused the growing Steward team with the strength to become the donors of 25,000 hours of service this past year.

A significant time in MSC's history occurred in 1999 when MSC hired Carla, first as an Administrator and then as the Executive Director. Carla's tremendous skills in advocacy coupled with her passion for the Preserve was a force to be reckoned with. That year brought the addition of key land purchases in the Lost Dog Wash area and the historic Brown's Ranch. During this time, Carla led the integration of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission (on which she sat as a commissioner), MSC, the City Council, and City staff into a unified team working toward the same goal: Completing the Preserve.

Stay tuned for the next installment ...

Choose a goal that seems right for you and strive to be the best, however hard the path. Aim high. Behave honorably. Prepare to be alone at times, and to endure failure. Persist! The world needs all you can give. You are capable of more than you know.

E. O. Wilson

From Isolated Parties Hunting for Animals to *Party Animals Hunting for Isolation*

By Len Marcisz, MSC Master Steward and Past Chairman of the MSC Board of Directors



The Lost Dog Wash is named for the ephemeral Lost Dog, of whom we know nothing — not its name, not its owner, not even its fate.

The pooch from the past serves only as an apocryphal reminder of the dangers facing those who fail to obey Scottsdale Revised Code, Chapter 21, Article II, Section 21-12, Paragraph 28 — requiring all dogs within the Preserve to be on a lead.

Washes, like people, do not need to be famous or great to be interesting. This wash has, during its existence, witnessed opportunities and tragedies, three of which we will examine briefly in this article.

Our first example is one of opportunity.

Approximately 1/4 mile from the trailhead, along the east side of the wash, is a stretch of steep, low, reddish tan cliffs. The wash at this point narrows, but is relatively open when compared to the brushy section further north. This is a hunting area — a 2000 year old hunting area. A low rise east of the cliffs, named the Sky Ridge Site for a once planned residential development, has yielded over 1000 stone chipped flakes, projectile points associated with hunting, and various stone tools used for skinning and butchering game — most likely deer. The evidence at this site suggests that hunting and gathering bands may have established ambush sites along the cliffs during mid to late Archaic times — approximately 2500 to 1600 years ago.

These small, independent bands may have found this area attractive for hunting large game and gathering seeds during the late winter and spring. The wash provided a highway, browse, and shelter for local game. During most spring seasons the local flora would have provided a variety of edible seeds, nuts, roots, and various herbal remedies for our wandering bands. Evidence at the site suggests occasional use until about 400 A.D., with a hiatus until the 1450s, when the site may have been used by early Yavapai bands.

The stone tools used for dressing game originated locally. Most were made of green-stone, a material quarried from a prominent rock outcropping about a mile north of the hunting site. The greenstone has fracture qualities that provide an edge sharp enough for skinning, butchering, scraping and boring. Perhaps our hunters established their ambush camp near our trailhead, then hiked carefully to the outcropping in order to survey the area and gather stone, which they brought back to the camp in order to chip (or knap) into tools while waiting for sunset or sunrise, and an opportunity to ambush deer traveling between bedding areas and feeding areas.

Evidence of the Archaic culture progressively diminishes between 100 A.D. and 500 A.D., as Hohokam cultural evidence begins to increase. One of the values of the McDowell is that they contain a greater concentration of Archaic evidence than any surrounding area — and much of it has been preserved through the commendable efforts of Scottsdale's citizens.



Our second example is one of opportunity lost.

The first permanent residents of the Lost Dog area were the Harold Baxter family, who homesteaded here circa 1925 through 1945. Their main house was located on the south-east side of the Lost Dog Wash, about 100 yards south of where the ramada is located. The homestead consisted of a main house, garage, storage shed, a well, a compound wall, and two privies.

The Baxters established their homestead during the 1920s — a period of great economic promise. The last 15 years of their homesteading, however, were no doubt affected by the Great Depression and World War II. To make a go of it, the Baxters subsidized their income by constructing a guest house in the area of what is today the intersection of Via Linda and 124th Street, catering to dove and quail hunters as well as seekers of the dude ranch experience.

But in Arizona, water is the measure of survival. Few homesteaders here had access to sufficiently stable water sources. The Baxters sank several wells on their property over the years, seeking to maintain a dependable water supply. Their last, forlorn effort was undertaken in 1944-1945, a few hundred yards east of the trailhead. The well failed to produce and the Baxter family homestead came to an end.

Our final example is one of tragic loss.

In 1943, as they were struggling to keep their dream alive, the Baxters, and perhaps their quail hunting guests, would have grown accustomed to the occasional low overflights of AT-6 Texas Trainers — aircraft flown over the McDowells by British Royal Air Force cadets training at Falcon Field, north of Mesa. These training flights emphasized tight formation flying, nearly wing-on-wing. On January 18th, 1943, two RAF cadets, Balence and Lawther, were flying in tight formation over the McDowells when their aircraft collided. Both planes crashed in the upper reaches of the Lost Dog drainage, northeast of the trailhead. Cadet Balence survived. Cadet Lawther and his instructor were fatally injured. RAF recovery teams stripped the crash site of all major electronics, fuselage, wings, and engine components, leaving behind a few empty petrol cans, a few pieces of mangled metal and wiring, and the cockpit frame, half buried, upside down, in the bottom of a remote tributary wash — lonesome and sobering testimony to a young man's life given for his country, albeit over the faraway blue skies of Arizona. There is indeed a small piece of the Lost Dog Wash that will be "Forever England."

With the end of World War II and the abandonment of the Baxter Homestead, the Lost Dog Wash reverted to nature, becoming a popular area for sighting in hunting rifles, shot-gunning clay pigeons, hiking, trail riding, car dumping, and, of course, a favorite haunt of modern party animals whose hunting and gathering involved hunting for beer and gathering for remote desert celebrations of life.

As you tread these trails and enjoy this prudently preserved Sonoran desert, we hope that you appreciate the footsteps — also the paw prints — of those who have traveled these trails before you.

MSC offers Guided Hikes every Saturday and Sunday October through April. Visit our website at www.mcdowellsonoran.org for details.

Welcome the Newest Preservation Staff Member!



Claire Miller, Preserve Manager, City of Scottsdale

The City of Scottsdale is pleased and proud to introduce Robbin Schweitzer, the new Preserve Manager and member of the Preservation team! Most recently, Robbin worked as a Park Ranger for the City of Phoenix Natural Resource Division, where, like most Park Rangers, she was responsible for a wide variety of different tasks.

Robbin has worked quite a bit with volunteers from all age groups and backgrounds — from Eagle Scouts to "weed whackers," to the Maricopa County Jail Chain Gang. Needless to say, her work with volunteers makes her an easy match with the city and the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy — it didn't take long for her to jump in and run a large trail construction project on her own. An admitted field work lover, she will be spending as much time as possible in the various trailhead and Preserve locations, taking care of routine maintenance activities, special projects, and of course working with the Preserve volunteers!

One of Robbin's favorite assignments as a Phoenix Park Ranger was the Mounted Patrol. Any day that Robbin could spend on a horse was a great day! She loved patrolling the trails and mountain parks on horseback, and enjoyed "sharing" her horse with park visitors, giving out the ranger horse trading cards and teaching the public about the mounted patrol and horses in general. I'm sure she will equally enjoy any opportunity to check out the trails in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve on horseback (but we will have to bring a horse for her to ride)!

While not an Arizona native, Robbin has lived in Arizona well over 30 years and is very familiar with the Sonoran Desert. She grew up in Chandler and currently resides there. She loves spending time in the outdoors — and is an avid hiker and camper that also loves to fish!

Join us in welcoming Robbin to the team — you will find her to be friendly and personable — and very happy to work with you "in the dirt" at any time!

photo credit: Marianne Wallace

ask an expert

Q: How Big Is The Preserve?

A: Currently, 16,000 acres are preserved while another 20,000 acres remain to be acquired within the recommended boundary voters approved for inclusion. When complete, the Preserve will permanently protect one third of the City of Scottsdale and **will be the largest urban preserve in the nation.**

	McDowell Sonoran Preserve 57 sq mi
	City of Tempe 39.5 sq mi
	South Mountain 25 sq mi
	Carefree 8.9 sq mi
	Ctrl Pk 1.32 sq mi



Graphic; Information compiled by Scott Hamilton, Preserve Trails Manager

Make MSC a Stop to Shop on Your Holiday “To Do” List

Here are just some of the great items you will find



The Family Corner

A good non-fiction story should be more than just a bunch of facts. Author Conrad J. Storad, nationally known for his children's books about the Sonoran Desert, says that non-fiction stories should be fun. That's exactly what he tries to do with each and every book that he writes for young readers. Each book's 'star' is represented in a stuffed animal that can be purchased with the book. (Book prices vary from \$10 to \$20, stuffed animals \$6)

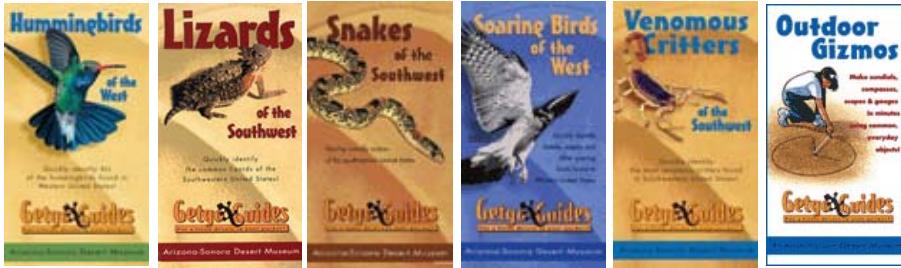


Books and Resources

The "Getgo Guides" are a great resource and are perfect for everyone. (\$5 each)



The Book of Answers is just that -answers to the most common questions about living in the Sonoran Desert. This book is beautifully illustrated and written in layman's terms. It is perfect for people who have lived in the Valley for years, or a great gift for newcomers. (\$15)



Special Feature: Flora Photo ID Guide to the McDowell Sonoran Preserve by Marianne Skov Jensen



This resource is one of the most well-done ID books we have encountered. And, it is all about our Preserve! Author and photographer Marianne Jensen is a self-taught nature enthusiast who knows how hard it is to find resources that are user-friendly. She took up the challenge to create a flora guide for the Preserve that everyone can use and she more than succeeded.

With more beautiful photographs than you will find in any other guide, it is just the right size for carrying in your backpack and the spiral binding helps you flip through the pages with ease. Although designed for use in the Preserve, it is appropriate for natural areas outside of the Preserve as well. This will be the gift your outdoor enthusiast will cherish! (\$20)



Fun Stuff

The MSC shop carries all kinds of fun items. Here are a few examples.



These Carolyn Schmitz **Notecards** are a huge hit with the staff and office volunteers. Each of these lovely ladies is decked out in her Sunday best. The back of each notecard provides the names of the flora and fauna used to make their apparel. There are 10 different images to choose from. (\$4 each)



Ecojot Stationary These hardcover notebooks are perfect for your backpack or purse! They are made out of 100% recycled paper and come in many colors, shapes, and sizes.



Hats Keep the sun off your face and show your MSC support at the same time by wearing one of our ball caps. (\$15)



Special Feature: “Be Green” Challenge Totes

We challenge you to pass up these fantastic totes and continue to use plastic. We just don't think you can!

These beautiful totes are made from cotton yarn produced from the excess fabric of newly made clothing and from yarn made from recycled soda bottles. This unique manufacturing process saves land, energy and water. And, you can't tell the difference between these and standard canvas. They come in two varieties: long-handled for over-the-shoulder use and short-handled. (\$10 each or all five designs for \$40)



McDowell Sonoran Challenge

February 28, 2009

15k Run • 22mile Bike • 9mile Hike



Take the Challenge! Bike, Hike, or Run in State Trust Land designated for conservation, and help spread the message that the Preserve needs to be completed.

use permit, we have been granted access by Department for this special event to support servancy.

ll be held on Saturday, February 28 with regis- a School Road, north of Dynamite. Parking is g center on the corner of Alma School Road and

Dynamite thanks to Hurd Real Estate, and a shuttle will be available to take people to the trailhead. Separate courses for mountain bikes, trail runners and hikers will lead participants through beautiful mountains and desert. Hikers will experience the historic Brown's Ranch on their 7-9 mile trip, riders will ride a 22 mile course past Granite Mountain and Balanced Rock, and runners will race 15K past Cone Mountain.

The post-challenge fitness expo and cele- bration will be held from 9 a.m. until Noon and will include food and beverage, music, merchandise and fun for hike, bike and runner enthusiasts of all ages.

Challenge Schedule

7:00 a.m. Registration opens

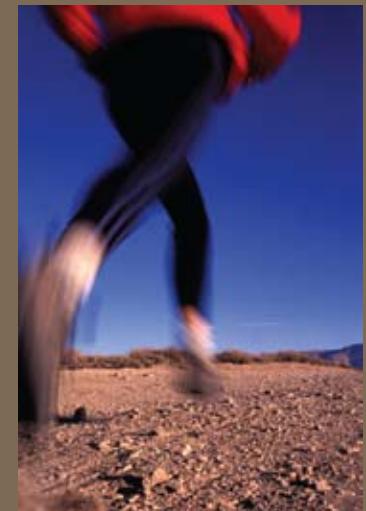
8:00 a.m. Bikers start

8:15 a.m. Runners start

8:30 a.m. Hikers start

9:00 a.m. Fitness Expo

Cost is \$35 per participant. T-shirts will be available for \$10. Space is limited, so register early! For more information and to register visit our website at www.mc-dowellsonoran.org or go to www.active.com and look for our event.



APS Conservation Camp in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve

How can kids protect the environment in their own backyard? They can become a **Green Teen** at the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy Conservation Camp presented by APS!

We are recruiting a new generation of environmental leaders—teenagers whose commitment to the Earth starts from their own experience in wild places in their neighborhoods, desert, arroyos, and mountains.

The desert, bajadas, arroyos and mountains in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve are the place for adventurers who want to protect the environment and explore it. Because if you understand nature, you can help save it! Our environmental camp is a place where you can discover your *inner green...* **Green Teens** will hike, climb, and bike through undiscovered territory.

Do you know how to survive in the desert? How to use GPS, or climb a rock wall? Can you tell the difference between a gila monster and a gila woodpecker? Can you follow the *Leave No Trace* principles? Do you know how long it takes for a plastic bottle to disintegrate if left in the desert, or what the effects of air pollution are on the McDowell Mountains?

If you are ages 13-18, like adventure and wilderness exploration, and want to make sure our urban wilderness remains protected, join us during spring break either March 9-13, 2009 or March 16- 20, 2009 from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. each day. Teens will be split into three sessions: 7th-8th grade, 9th-10th grade, or 11th-12th grade. \$400 fee includes lunch each day. Scholarships are available.

Space is limited so sign up early at www.mc-dowellsonoran.org. For more information contact the MSC office at (480) 998-7971, ext. 100.

preserve up close

Christmas Cholla (*Cylindropuntia leptocaulis*)

Although there are cultivated varieties of cactus and euphorbia called Christmas Cactus, the native *Opuntia leptocaulis*, or Christmas Cholla, is known by this common name because, throughout the winter, it is covered with bright red fruit that resemble Christmas ornaments. Other common names include Tasajillo, Holycross Cholla and Desert Christmas Cactus.

Christmas Cholla is native to the Sonoran and Chihuahuan deserts of Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and northern Mexico. Preferred habitat includes desert slopes, washes and flat areas from 1,000 to 4,000 feet elevation. Christmas Cholla grow very well in the northern parts of the Preserve.

Cholla is a term applied to cactus in the genus *cylindropuntia*, which literally means cylindrical, segmented stems. These segments, or joints, easily separate from the plant, and root to form new plants. This is an adaptation which allows the cacti in this genus to reproduce, as the flowers are often sterile. The rooted joints are clones of the parent plant.

The Christmas Cholla is commonly squat and highly-branched, growing entwined with other shrubs. Stem joints are only about 1/8" thick, making it one of the most slender of all chollas. Each areole only has one long 2" spine. Flowers are pale yellow to bronze colored, up to 1 inch wide and bloom along the stems in May and June.



WHY I CARE...

By Betty Miller, MSC Steward and Preserve Connections Leader

The Preserve Connection program is a unique collaboration between the City of Scottsdale and the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy. The purpose of the program is to introduce the citizens in the southern part of the City with their Preserve. I thought you might enjoy the story of a typical Preserve Connection morning – this is why I care.



As I tumble out of my vehicle I hear, "Is this the meeting place for the hike?" Already they are arriving and I have yet to get myself organized. The warming Arizona sun is rising in the east. I don my hat and place the "Preserve Connection" sign on the asphalt next to my car. I'm ready...I think. Darcy Davis walks up complete with backpack and baseball cap. She walks only blocks from home to assist with the registration of the hikers who are now beginning to pull into the Granite Reef Senior Center lot with some frequency. No bus yet.

We chat with the hikers, old and young, tenderfeet and pros, while they sign the waivers for the hike. They are excited about the day and having this opportunity to hike with us. All the while we eye their footwear and water situation. Mostly it is water that is our concern. The new hikers underestimate the need.

Here comes the bus! I breathe a little easier. Even though there has been no problem with this aspect, I don't relax until it arrives. And a

nice bus it is, complete with restroom at the rear. The group already assembled makes its way on and chooses seats. Darcy passes some Preserve Connection gifts from the City to those who would like a refillable water bottle or a whistle while I gather the stragglers onto the bus and prepare to leave. Our driver stows the cooler stocked with water for me and we pull out and head North.

The ride to the trailhead finds me playing tour guide. I use the microphone to tell the enthusiastic group about the morning ahead, a short history of the Preserve and to thank them for preserving this piece of beautiful desert and mountains. I also answer all of the inevitable questions, including the old reliable ones about rattlesnakes. Soon we pull up to the trailhead and are greeted by blue shirts who will take us on down the trail. Here this hike becomes the same as any MSC hike. Everyone has a great time.

Tired but feeling great, the hikers return to the bus, some grabbing bottles of water from the cooler for the ride back to the Senior Center. Darcy and I distribute evaluation forms, thank the participants for coming along and ask them to tell their friends about this program, as well as all of the other hikes offered by MSC every weekend. The hikers have had a wonderful experience, and are effusive in their compliments about the City's Preserve Connection program and the MSC hike leaders. We make new friends for the Preserve every time.

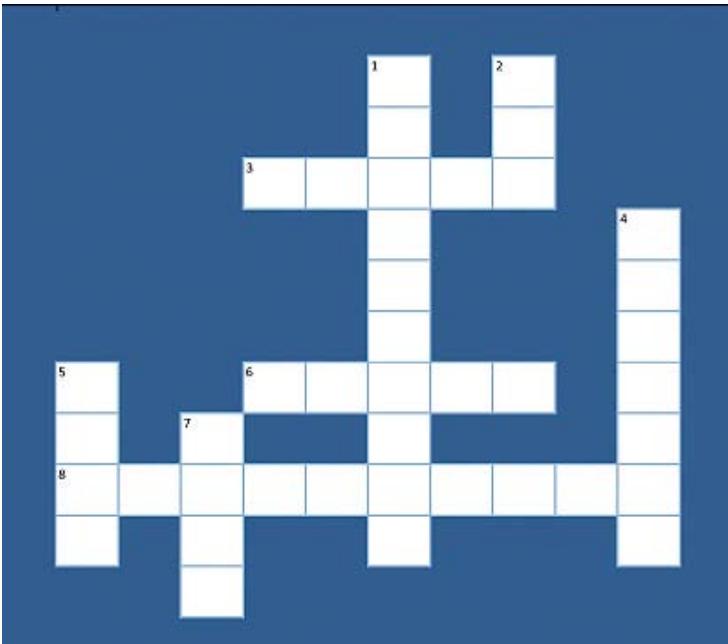
FAMILY FUN PAGE

MSC Youth Education
programming is supported by The
Boeing Company



BIRDS OF THE PRESERVE

Read the clues below to identify eight birds that live in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. Visit our website at <http://mcdowellsonoran.org/resources.html> to find the answers.



ACROSS

3 I stay together with my whole family. We live on the ground in a group called a 'covey'. We all have a long feather called a 'top knot' growing from our foreheads.

6 The feathers on my head are red, and brown on my body. I have a short strong beak to pinch open seeds. My name even rhymes with 'pinch'!

8 I make my home by hollowing out a hole in a saguaro cactus. I have a strong beak for pecking holes in trees to find insects to eat.

DOWN

1 I am a bird that lives mostly on the ground and can run fast. That's important because I catch lizards for my dinner.

2 I am a bird that flies at night looking for mice to eat. When you call out to me, I might say "Hoo?"

4 I fly high in the sky and smell the breeze hoping to smell something dead. To me this smells like a tasty treat.

5 I soar high in the sky during the daytime looking for something to eat on the desert floor. I like mice or snakes or even other birds to eat.

7 I am a pale grey bird and when I sing I quietly say 'coo coo coo'. I am often used as a symbol for 'peace'.

ASK ANGIE

**GO AHEAD -
ASK ME...**

Can you tell me about the big cactuses that look like they are waving at me?

-Wendy

Good Question Wendy! Here is a puzzle to play while you learn! Try to find all the words in capital letters in the word search square below. Visit our website at <http://mcdowellsonoran.org/resources.html> to find the answers.

The plant you are asking about is one of the biggest and oldest in the Preserve. It is called a SAGUARO (sa-war-o). It has many ROOTS spreading through the soil that keep it from falling down. It has a main TRUNK and branches that are called ARMS. The saguaro has GREEN skin which is where it makes food from sunlight. The saguaro's skin is PLEATED so it can stretch to hold more water and it is covered in SPINES that are sharp and GREY. When the saguaro blooms, the FLOWER is bright WHITE. After it is visited by bees, the flower will turn into a FRUIT that is RED and filled with hundreds of BLACK tiny SEEDS. Animals, like PACKRATS and JAVELINA, wait for the fruit to fall to the ground to get a tasty treat. Birds like HAWKS like to sit high on the saguaro's arms as they look for food.

G	E	J	P	F	D	O	W	B	I
R	U	R	R	L	R	E	S	L	P
E	E	U	O	A	E	E	R	A	B
Y	I	W	U	O	N	A	C	C	S
T	H	G	O	I	T	K	T	K	E
I	A	U	P	L	R	S	A	E	E
S	W	S	Z	A	F	A	R	M	D
L	K	D	T	N	E	E	R	G	S
W	S	S	G	A	T	R	U	N	K
O	A	N	I	L	E	V	A	J	O

Randy Babb

Information and Education Program Manager
Arizona Game and Fish Department, Region VI

Interview with a scientist



Randy Babb is a native of Arizona and grew up spending much of his free time in the state's wild lands. He started his professional career employed by the U.S. Forest Service working as a field technician on grazing impact studies in the southwest. In 1986, Randy moved to the Arizona Game and Fish Department doing contract work and soon became the Aquatic Education Program Manager working for the Education Branch. In 1993, he took a position in Mesa's Region VI Office overseeing information and education activities in central Arizona. He has worked on numerous studies and projects in Arizona, New Mexico, the southeastern U.S., Mexico, Central America, Vietnam, and southern Africa on small mammals, fish, reptiles and amphibians. Most recently he participated in a herpetological survey of Phu Quoc Island in South Vietnam. He has also provided illustrations and photographs for numerous books including: Biology of Gila Monsters and Beaded Lizards, Venomous Reptiles of Arizona, Amphibians and Reptiles in Arizona, Deer of the Southwest, Vampiro: Vampire Bat In Fact & Fantasy, Inland Fishes of the Greater Southwest: Chronicle of a Vanishing Biota.

You work on many general wildlife issues. What is your specialty/what are you most passionate about and why?

I am generally considered a reptiles and amphibian guy and that is one of my major interests. I have been very fortunate as that interest has taken me all over the world to many wonderful places. But I am also keenly interested in small mammals, native fishes, botany, and invertebrates. I try to do a little bit of everything so as to not be labeled as a herpetologist or mammalogist, although labels are unavoidable. I feel very strongly that we must conserve our native species, and somehow instill a sense of the intrinsic value of wildlife and the places they inhabit to the general public, if we are to ensure wildlife and wild places have a place in the future.

How does your job impact wildlife and the Preserve?

The way my job impacts wildlife and the Preserve is that hopefully I play a small role in generating an appreciation of, and educating the public about, wildlife. I strive to give people a realistic perspective of some of our less popular animals, such as scorpions and snakes. So that the next time they encounter a diamondback, instead of killing it, they give it a wide berth and let it go in its way. Once people realize everything is not out there to get them, they have the opportunity to make intelligent choices about wildlife and how they interact with it.

From a scientist's point of view, why is the McDowell Sonoran Preserve important?

The importance of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve and places like it cannot be overestimated. Preserves give people access to the natural world in close proximity to their homes and offer nature in a non-threatening way. Many people will not take off and go wandering around in the desert on their own. But a park or preserve with clearly marked trails and developed amenities allows people to feel

more comfortable and less threatened. In addition, the McDowell provide a sort of wild island for many migrating and resident wildlife species where they can exist or rest in natural habitats. Also, the McDowell are an important corridor for species such as mountain lions and deer that move through the range to access other wild lands.

If you could meet with a group of local residents, what topics would you discuss with them?

If I were to meet with locals I think I would like to discuss with them just what a miraculous place the Sonoran Desert is and how fortunate we are to have such a unique biome just out our back doors. We tend to take for granted the places we see every day, yet we live in one of the most biologically diverse areas in North America. I think the better we understand it, like most things, the greater our potential for appreciation.

Would you have the same conversation with kids?

I would discuss this with kids, but perhaps with a more hands-on emphasis. I feel we do children a great disservice by talking down to them or by watering down biological concepts when they are every bit as excited as we are about the same things, and have an incredible ability to grasp complex ideas if presented in the right way. Ask nearly any biologist what first got them interested in wildlife and it was probably chasing lizards or catching toads near their home. What kid wouldn't want to watch an animal at close quarters or see an owl feed its young? How is that different from most of us?

How can local residents—kids and adults—make a difference in saving the environment, or specifically, the Sonoran Desert?

I think the future of the Sonoran Desert lies in all our hands. Intelligent recreation, conservation, and encouraging others to do the same plays an important role in what the desert will look like in the future. The Sonoran Desert, partly because of its low rainfall, is a very fragile environment and the destruction of any single component can have dire ramifications throughout the ecosystem. Misuse of off road vehicles is probably one of the biggest threats to the wild places all across our state. I think many people just drive around having fun without any concept that they are destroying vegetation that perhaps took hundreds of years to grow, or that they are fragmenting habitat or disturbing wildlife with noise. There are in reality many, many threats and we just need to learn to be good neighbors and think before we act. We should ask ourselves, "Is this in the best interest of the desert?" Or, "Will someone be able to tell I was here and how long will any damage I create last?" Misuse and abuse of land has brought about great changes in the Sonoran Desert in a relatively short span of time. The Sonoran Desert is like no other place on the planet and is in danger of becoming something else – something less functional and far less beautiful.

MSC Preservation Partner Profile



If you received a call in the middle of the summer asking if you could put together a group of volunteers from your company to work in the desert and build a trail, what would you say? Well, John Summers, an employee with Medtronic said "Sure, I think I can put a group together." And so he did.

Medtronic volunteers came out to work with MSC volunteer Stewards and a Boy Scout group in the Preserve the last two weekends in September, to ready a trail needed for October's McDowell Sonoran Month activities. In total, the group completed over 2,000 linear feet of new trail construction. This new trail corridor will provide the connection between the existing Horseshoe Trail with the future Gateway Trailhead site and related trails, due to open in the late spring of 2009.



Medtronic's Mission in Action Volunteers, led by newly trained MSC Steward John Summers

Medtronic is passionate about improving the health of people and communities throughout the world, and their philanthropy reflects that passion. They focus community involvement in areas that include improving the health of people with chronic diseases, educating future generations of scientific innovators, and enhancing the communities where their employees live and work. Through partnerships like ours, Medtronic's 37,000 employees worldwide help to build stronger communities. Thank you Medtronic!



Sheri Propster (foreground) from Backpacker Magazine joins locals on the REI/MSC hike

MSC Preservation Partner Profile

Not only has REI given MSC their support through funding and in-kind support for MSC's youth education programs, this summer REI also hosted *Backpacker* Magazine's Get Out More Tour with program hosts Sheri and Randy Propster on a hike led by MSC Stewards on the Ringtail Loop. In addition to getting new people out enjoying the Preserve, this partnership has yielded a number of great opportunities.

REI recommended the McDowell Sonoran Preserve for a feature in *Backpacker* Magazine. Also, MSC is now a member of the REI affiliate program which means that anytime someone goes to our website and clicks on the REI logo (found on the Corporate Partners page at <http://www.mcdowellsonoran.org/CurrentPreservationPartners.htm>), 5% of the purchases will come back to support MSC programs!

REI's passion for the outdoors runs deep. Their core purpose is to inspire, educate and outfit people for a lifetime of outdoor adventure and stewardship. REI is committed to getting people outside and leading healthy active lives, caring for our planet by protecting shared natural spaces, and engaging others in making a difference. It is how they operate their stores, finding ways to improve the environmental performance of their business, while they strive to generate positive environmental, social and financial results. Their employees play an important role in our efforts through volunteering for service projects, recycling, identifying opportunities for efficiencies in operations, and much more.

What began as a group of 23 mountain climbing buddies is now the nation's largest consumer cooperative with more than three million active members. But no matter how large they grow, REI's roots remain firmly planted in the outdoors. Their passion for outdoor adventure is clear, and their commitment to conservation is unwavering. Thank you REI!

McDowell Sonoran Society

The McDowell Sonoran Society includes those individuals whose total annual giving in a fiscal year is \$1500 or above.

McDowell Sonoran Society members are community leaders and conservation advocates. They support ecologically sustainable public policies and care for the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. They come together at special events and activities to enjoy the natural world and learn about the diverse plants and animals of the Sonoran Desert. The dedication of McDowell Sonoran Society members enables the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy to protect our area's open spaces, provide educational programs for people of all ages and advance the conservation agenda.

McDowell Sonoran Society members have the opportunity to learn more about conservation through private hikes, trips to

interesting areas and lectures by experts. Recently, McDowell Sonoran Society members were able to experience ASU's Decision Theater in a private 27-seat auditorium, where they learned about the sustainability of metro Phoenix and how conservation of natural resources is so important to the future. Upcoming events include a private trip to the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art's skyspace, and Environmental Salons hosted by MSC friends who live in interesting homes near the Preserve.

Join the McDowell Sonoran Society. Through your leadership support you will play a vital role in the future of the Preserve and the lives of our children and grandchildren. Call Linda Raish at 480-998-7971 ext. 101 for more information, or go to our website at www.mcdowellsonoran.org/donate

Memorial Gifts

An honorarium or memorial is a thoughtful way of paying tribute to a relative, friend or associate while supporting the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy and the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. All memorial gifts made since 1992 have been restricted for use to support a memorial in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve at Inspiration Viewpoint.

Inspiration Viewpoint is a location along the Windgate Trail that is surrounded by mountains, a steep canyon and lush Sonoran Desert that overlooks the Valley and provides a dramatic first glimpse of Windgate Pass. Inspiration Viewpoint will contain seating areas professionally constructed out of the existing rock to allow visitors to reflect and meditate in this beautiful Sonoran Desert location. Those who aren't able to make the hike to Inspiration Viewpoint will have a lovely reflection area available to them in the Gateway at the start of the trail. Inspiration Viewpoint will be completed concurrently with the planned opening of the Gateway Access Area scheduled for May 2009.

Any future memorial gifts will be used for stewardship of the Preserve. If you would like to remember a special person or occasion, what better way to honor those who appreciate the Sonoran Desert and mountains than by helping to protect the natural diversity that makes the area so unique? The honoree or their family will be notified of your gift if an address is provided, and we will also send you an acknowledgment of your gift for your records.

The following have made Memorial Gifts or Honorariums since September, 2007: (in addition to those listed previously)

In memory of Leisa Lewis

Donations given by:
Jenna Lillibridge

In memory of Myrna Smith

Donations given by:
Michael and Angela Frazier

In memory of Sam Hamilton

Donations given by:
Richard and Crystine Benson
Denise Carpenter and Family
Reidun Daeffler

Alice and John Demetra
Melinda and John Gulick

Larry and Diana Levy
Paul and Sharon Madson

Joni Millavec

Barbara Pringle

Betty Tatro

In honor of Phil Kenney

Donations given by:
Scottsdale Paradise Valley
Y-Trekkers

In honor of John Elliot Kurlander

Donations given by:
Sandra and Jerome Kurlander

In memory of Sam Hedstrom

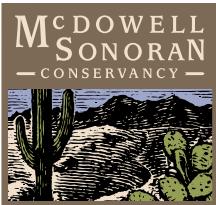
Donations given by:
William Jackson



photo credit: Marianne Wallace

"We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children."

- Native American Proverb



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Adopt A Trail

When you give today to the Adopt-A-Trail program, you will help the Conservancy protect and restore the McDowell Sonoran Preserve.

With your \$50 donation to the Adopt-A-Trail program, you will receive:

- Personalized certificate with signature photo of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve commemorating your generosity;
- Colorful fact sheet about the wildlife that can be found in the area;
- Mountain Lines and other materials to keep you informed all year long about the Preserve and the work the Conservancy is doing to protect it.

Best of all, you'll get the satisfaction of knowing you're helping to protect this extraordinary wild habitat now and for future generations. Please help us protect the Preserve today!

Give Adopt-A-Trail as a Gift

You can also give Adopt-A-Trail as a gift. Your friend or loved one will adore this one-of-a-kind nature gift and enjoy it throughout the year.

Go online to www.mcdowellsonoran.org to make your gift. Be sure to indicate you wish to Adopt-A-Trail. Thank you for your support!

