

Mountain Lines

Vol.14, No. 6 March, 2008 Preserving Our Desert and Mountains www.mcdowellsonoran.org

MSC to Donate \$1.6 Million Land Parcel To City of Scottsdale for Preserve

The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy has accepted the donation of a conservation easement by a long-time MSC donor and supporter of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, and will transfer the donation to Scottsdale Mayor Mary Manross at a ceremony in March. This donation, valued at \$1.6 million, demonstrates both the willingness of the community to support MSC and the attractiveness land donations offer landowners because of their potential tax benefits.

A conservation easement is a legal agreement that restricts the type and amount of development that may take place on a property. An easement's restrictions are tailored to the property and to the interests of the donor. A typical easement has the effect of limiting real estate development while allowing certain other uses to continue. It generally is put in place to protect some important conservation value, such as wildlife habitat.

The conservation easement is on a 10-acre parcel of upland Sonoran Desert that could have been developed for residential use. The parcel is located just north of DC Ranch in the Pinnacle Peak area. It provides valuable wildlife habitat for deer, bobcats and javelina, and is home to diverse plant species ranging from Ajo lily to saguaro cactus. Because half the parcel is outside of the 36,400-acre Recommended Study Boundary (RSB) estab-



City of Scottsdale Director of Preservation Bob Caferella and MSC Managing Director Ruth Carll look over the land Parcel being donated to the city for the Preserve

lished by Scottsdale voters in 1995, the donation expands the Preserve.

McDowell Sonoran Conservancy Executive Director Ruthie Carll sees the donation as another example of how MSC is a valued partner of the city of Scottsdale. "Through gifts of land to MSC that we are then able to donate to the city, our partnership helps complete the McDowell Sonoran Preserve," she says.

Carll is looking forward to an active 2008 for conserving land, both through additional land or easement donations and measures that will reform state trust land disposition.

Governor Janet Napolitano has said she expects a state trust land reform measure to be on the ballot in November, 2008. She has indicated that she supports reform that will allow for increased funding options for disposing of the state's 9.2 million trust acres.

State trust land reform is needed to complete the Preserve. 🗳️

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Creating a conservation easement is a way to ensure that it remains in tact for future generations to enjoy.

The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy has found its stride and hit the trail.

Over the past 2 years, MSC focused its energy on capacity-building activities while at the same time providing quality stewardship of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. We grew in physical capital by opening our first office, and in social capital by training more than 100 new volunteers, hiring additional staff and expanding the board of directors. We also worked hard to secure ourselves financially, building our endowment, diversifying our giving opportunities and streamlining expenses.



Community residents now have a place to find us, and the number of walk-in visitors has far surpassed our expectations. Volunteers have a place to hold meetings or just meet for coffee, and this new energy has helped to increase our volunteer hours. Enabling board members, staff and volunteers to interact in one location generates a sense of unity that MSC had not experienced in the past. We have laid a foundation for growth and now are in a position to increase our outreach to the broader community.

MSC is poised to begin a new adventure. Exciting plans have been laid for each area of our mission: advocacy, education and stewardship.

Advocacy

Our goal is to be the vehicle that integrates the McDowell Sonoran Preserve into the fabric of our community. With our partner, the city of Scottsdale, we will help residents understand the significance and benefits of the Preserve. We will continue to be a leading voice for land conservation and sustainability locally and statewide.

Education

We will expand our efforts in educating youth, a critical step toward ensuring a future that includes the wonders of our natural world. We will bring more people into the Preserve through our hiking and trailhead-education programs, and by providing other recreation opportunities that promote a positive relationship between the people and the land.

Stewardship

In the last 18 months, our organization has grown and changed. As the Preserve grows, so must MSC's stewardship activities. We will seek to continually expand our cadre of volunteers through increased recruitment and corporate volunteer involvement.

This is an exciting time to be part of the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy. There are many ways for each of you to become part of this adventure. I hope you will join us!

Ruthie Carll,
Executive Director

During our strategic planning, the board has identified strengthening our education programming as a primary goal. In order to determine the best direction for our program development, we would like to hear from you!

Please take a moment to share your thoughts. Would you like trailhead demonstrations? Recreation classes? Science Classes? Kid's Classes? Speaker's Bureau? What educational opportunities could we provide that would increase your enjoyment and stewardship of the Preserve?

Email your input to ruthie@mcdowellsonoran.org

Thank You!

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

MSC Staff:

- Ruthie Carll, Executive Director
- Debbie Frey, Office Manager
- Sandra Kurlander, Data Manager
- Annette MacLean, Program Asst.
- Linda Raish, Community Development Director

MSC Board of Directors:

- Len Marcisz, Chairman
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- Sue Livingston
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The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

Mountain Lines creative design donated by Debra Doss

Master Stewards Make MSC Strong



by Bernie Finkel
Master Steward and Mentor Program Chair

MSC volunteers are called Stewards. At February's Steward Retreat, we recognized our volunteers for their service. MSC recognition of a Stewards' service can be for quantity of service (hours per year and cumulatively), longevity of service (in five-year increments), or through honorary awards. The recognition for breadth of service is a change in title – from Steward to Master Steward.



above left: Master Steward Steve Dodd puts in many hours of trail work along with leading hikes and other activities; right: Master Steward, Len Marcisz gets ready to release a rehabilitated hawk.



above: Master Steward, Dan Gruber, leading a Geology Hike; left: You can try to keep up with Master Steward Jane Rau - but you'll have to be quick!



The Master Steward designation is given to Stewards once they meet the following criteria:

1. They have received the 5-year service award.
2. In the year of selection, they contribute a minimum of 100 hours.
3. They have participated substantially in a minimum of four MSC programs.
4. They have held at least one leadership position.
5. They exemplify the values of Stewardship.

At this year's retreat, the following Stewards became Master Stewards: Dan Gruber, Len Marcisz, Bill McNulty, Jane Rau, Larry Shaw, Allan Willey.

They joined only eighteen other Stewards who have received this special honor. Congratulations!

WHY I CARE

by Bobby Alpert
Steward Education Chairman, Steward Training Chair

As I enter my 4th year of Stewarding I look back fondly on all the people who have shaped and enhanced my MSC experience. Stewards come in different sizes, shapes and looks. They have varied histories and come from different parts of the world.

Working with these wonderful people has truly enhanced the quality of my life. Surely a great common denominator binds them. What is it that makes them want to give so much time and effort to our cause?

I hope their answer is the same as mine. I care because the future of the earth is important. One hundred years from now no one will remember how much money I made or how big my house was. No one will remember what kind of car I drove or the clothes I wore. But they will remember that I was part of an organization that helped preserve nature. They'll remember that I helped to maintain, preserve and protect the natural resources we hold so dear.

What better eulogy can describe someone than "he cared." The true mantra of the MSC is "we care."

My children's children someday will walk the paths and trails that we Stewards have built and patrolled. They will learn about the McDowell Sonoran Preserve at the Desert Discovery Center we will help create. What a wonderful legacy I shall leave behind.

State Trust Land Reform

by Howard Myers, MSC Board Member

Trust land was given to Arizona by the Federal Government when Arizona became a territory, and again in 1912 when it became a state. More than 10 million acres were deeded, to be sold or leased to benefit certain public institutions, mainly the public schools. The Arizona State Land Department was formed and charged with managing this land. Its charter was to sell or lease it for the "highest and best use" in order to provide the maximum benefit to the beneficiaries. Money obtained from selling or leasing the land is placed in a trust account, with only the interest being used to supplement the beneficiaries' annual budgets. Even with all the land sold or leased so far, these benefits amount to only about 1.6% of the school system's annual funding requirements.



this land at open auction in the new environment.

The change also caused many to reformulate their notions of what might be in the "highest and best" interests of the schools that are the main beneficiaries of trust-land transactions. Simply put, land sold for high-density residential projects can put a lot more

children in an area's classrooms, with the cost of their education outweighing the dollar gain the sales produce. On the other hand, if the same land were sold for preservation—even at a lower price than it otherwise might fetch—a school system might benefit more financially because there would be no costs to offset the added income.



Many areas in state trust land are perfectly suited for conservation.

At the time of statehood, most Arizona residents lived in rural areas, so trust lands mostly were leased or sold for farming or ranching. As the state became more urban, large tracts increasingly were purchased for residential development. Farmers, ranchers and even cities found that they no longer could compete with real estate developers for

which can lead to lower taxes on residents. Exempting large chunks of land from development eases traffic congestion, reduces air pollution and reduces an area's infrastructure needs.

Alas, current law allows no avenue for municipalities to set aside or buy land for preservation without a public auction.

Research indicates that a sustainable community must include natural open spaces.



Preservation of scenic and environmentally sensitive state land can produce other positive values for a community and region. It provides opportunities for healthful outdoor recreation and promotes tourism,

To change the way state trust land is disposed of, it is necessary to change both the state constitution and the Federal Enabling Act that deeded the land to the state originally. Arizona's interpretation of the law so far has been to sell the land by auction to the highest bidder, period. For reasons stated above, that stance is outdated and often does not provide maximum benefit to our schools or the residents of Arizona.

Previous attempts at finding a way to preserve state trust land have failed for political or legal reasons. Governor Fife Symington initiated the Arizona Preserve Initiative (API), which allowed land designated as suitable for conservation to be auctioned solely for conservation purposes, but after API's constitutionality was challenged it hasn't been a viable vehicle for land purchases. Numerous other attempts at state land reform have been defeated in recent years, including Proposition 106, a wide-ranging citizen initiative on the November, 2006, ballot that would have preserved some state trust land outright and allowed cities to buy additional land for conservation purposes without public auction. Despite the support of both conservationists and most education groups, it was narrowly defeated in a campaign highlighted by homebuilders' negative ads.

Now, moves are underway to take another run at the issue. Governor Janet Napolitano has taken a leadership role, forming a committee of state legislators on both sides of the issue and challenging them to work together on the matter. This group is said to be readying a bill that would be simpler than Prop 106 but still facilitate the acquisition of land for preservation by municipalities. If it passes the House and the Senate during this legislative session, this measure would appear on the November 2008 ballot.



"Climb the mountains and get their good tidings.
Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees.
The winds will blow their own freshness into you...
while cares will drop off like autumn leaves."

- John Muir

Advocacy Alert

As we learned in 2006, when Proposition 106 failed despite endorsements by leading Arizona politicians and the editorial pages of most of the state's major newspapers, we have to work smart as well as hard to exempt from the auction block trust land duly set aside for preservation. Land is the main source of wealth in Arizona and anything that touches on its disposition stirs fierce competition. We can expect our opponents to always be determined and well financed.

In the coming months MSC will use Mountain Lines and email advocacy alerts to keep you abreast of news touching on state trust land reform and conservation efforts locally and nationally. Not sure if you are on our advocacy alert distribution list? Sign up at www.mcdowellsonoran.org

We hope you'll pass along our messages to your friends or, better yet, involve them in our cause. The Preserve's completion will depend upon our success in state land reform.

Get Involved

There are many things you can do if you are interested in conservation. Here are just a few of the activities that MSC volunteers do:

Build and Maintain Trails • Host Trailheads • Lead Hikes • Facilitate Recreation • Remove Invasive Plants • Patrol by Horse, Bike, or Boot • Host Events • Teach About Conservation • Help at the Office and much more...

Work with us and together we will realize a vision that indeed changes our world.

on the trails

Conceptual Preserve Trails System Plan



by Scott Hamilton, City of Scottsdale Trails Manager

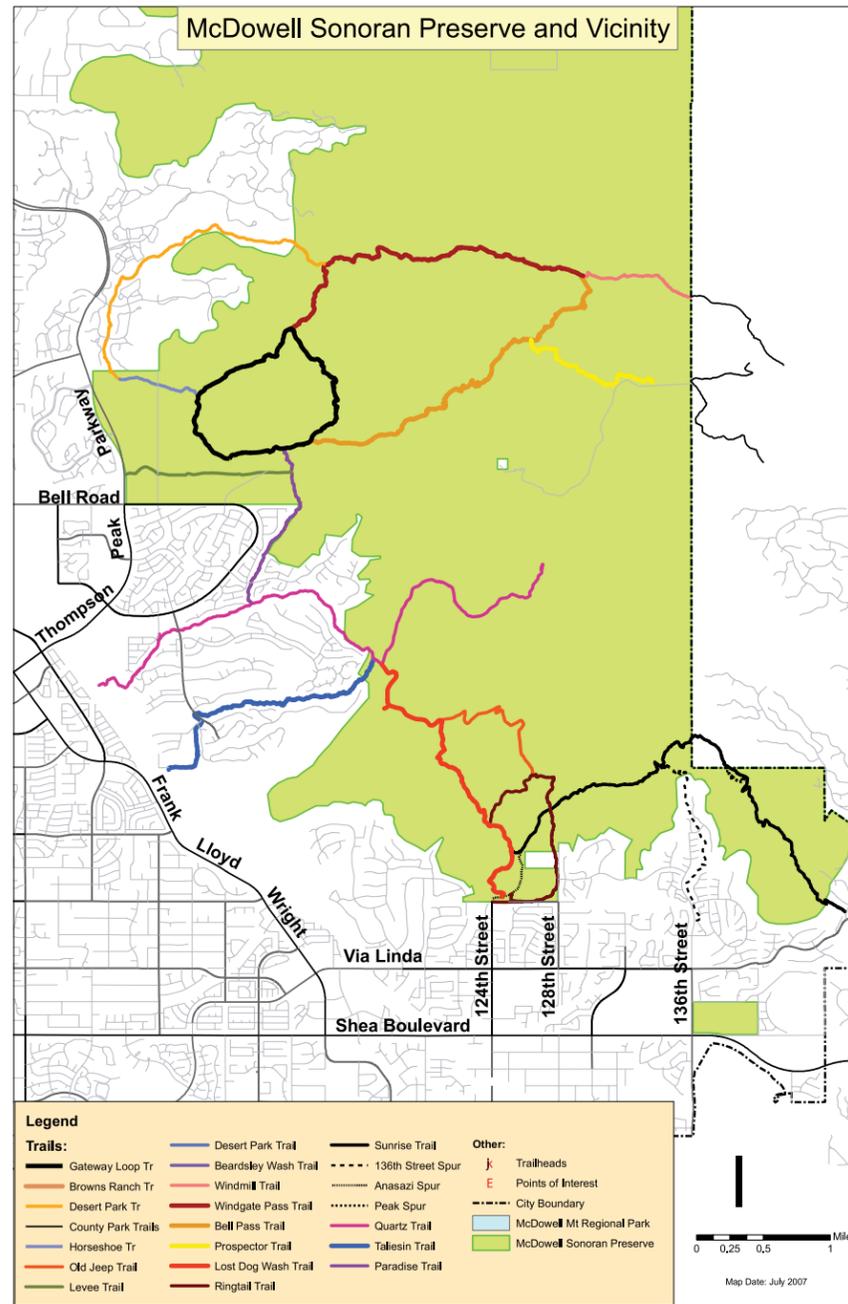
As regular as the tides, governments rely on plans. The city of Scottsdale has plans for land use, transportation, economic vitality, public services, parks, libraries... the list goes on. The McDowell Sonoran Preserve is no exception, having a number of plans that govern its creation, use and management. In this article I will focus on one plan in particular, the Conceptual Preserve Trails System Plan (Trails Plan).

The Trails Plan serves as a guide for the creation and management of the multiple-use trails in the Preserve. Its goal is to ensure appropriate access for Preserve users while protecting sensitive plant and animal habitats and cultural and historic resources. All trails constructed within the Preserve must follow the alignments shown on the Trails Plan. The Preserve Ordinance requires users to stay on designated trails; thus, the plan controls where access may legally occur.

The first Trails Plan, created through an intensive public-involvement process, was approved by the Preserve Commission and accepted by the City Council in 1998. Proposed changes must go through a public-involvement process and are considered by the Preserve Commission. In 2000 the Trails Plan was updated to take into account the expansion of the Preserve boundary to the north of the McDowell Mountains, including trails within the state trust land areas east of Pima Rd. and north of Dynamite Blvd. This summer the Preserve Commission approved modifications to the plan, resulting in the addition of four new trail alignments.

Now you are probably thinking 'Great, we have a plan, but what does this mean for me—which trails can I use and how do I get to them?'

Since 1998 the city, with invaluable support from the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy, constructed approximately 30 miles of multiple-use trails within the Preserve and another 10 miles of trails adjacent to it. The creation of trails and access points began in the southern McDowells and moved north. Maps of the southern area, including such favorite trails as Lost Dog Wash, Ringtail and Sunrise, are available from the Preservation office, MSC or the city's website (www.scottsdaleaz.gov/Assets/documents/preserve/TrailMaps.pdf). The city currently is working on a map of the central region of the Preserve, including the Windgate Pass,



Bell Pass and Gateway Loop trails. The Gateway Access Area, construction of which is planned to start in 2008, will be the main entrance to this region, and will include additional interpretive and connector trails.

With the summer over, our attention has turned to the Preserve's northern region, primarily the area around the prominent rock projection known as Tom's Thumb. We are in the process of laying out the Tom's Thumb Trail, which will connect from the Windgate Pass Trail north to the future North McDowell Access Area. We plan to have construction of this trail begin in the first half of 2008. Keep an eye on the MSC website's event calendar for opportunities to get involved.

If you have any questions about the Trails Plan, or anything trail related, please contact me at shamilton@scottsdaleAZ.gov or (480) 312-7722. See you on the trail! 🏃



MSC Spring Hikes

Saturday, March 1, 8:30 a.m.—The Human McDowells on the Ringtail Loop. See the McDowells the way a native hunting party did in a 2.5-mile hike on the Ringtail Loop. Allow about 2.5 hours. Meet at #3

Sunday, March 2, 8:30 a.m.—Windgate-Bell Loop. A rugged, 11-mile loop in the newly opened Gateway area of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve offers excellent East Valley and interior-mountain views. More than 2,000 feet of climbing is involved. For hardy hikers. Allow about 6 hours. Meet at #4

Saturday, March 8, 8:30 a.m.—Big Saguaro Loop. A 5-mile hike in the state trust land visits a 30-armed desert giant. Good photo ops. Mild inclines only. About 3.5 hours. Meet at #1

Sunday, March 9, 8:30 a.m.—Paradise Trail to Gateway Saddle. About a 6-mile roundtrip with a 700-foot elevation gain. A new hike in the Gateway area! A few steep places. About 3 hours. Meet at #4

Saturday, March 15, 8:30 a.m.—Sunrise End to End. Hike the entire scenic Sunrise Trail beginning at the 145th Way Trailhead and ending at 128th St. It's 5.1-miles with ± 1,000-foot elevation gain. Some steep places. Allow about 3.5 hours. Meet at #2

Sunday, March 16, 8:30 a.m. Geology Hike on the Gateway Loop trail. Learn how the McDowells and surrounding mountains were formed on a 5.3-mile hike with about a 700-foot elevation gain. Climbing is on gradual grades. About 3.5 hours. Meet at #4

Saturday, March 22, 8:30 a.m.—Wildflower Walk. Join our experts in identifying and learning about the Sonoran Desert's beautiful wildflowers. Trail to be announced on the website www.mcdowellsonoran.org. No set distance; mild inclines only. About 2 hours. Meet TBA

Sunday, March 23, 8:30 a.m.—Dixie Mine. Learn about mining in the McDowells on a 5.5-mile hike that visits a former working mine site. Great scenery, too. Some ups and downs, and a few steep places. Allow about 4 hours. Meet at #3

Where to meet before the hike

Meeting Place #1: The end of Alma School Rd. north of Dynamite Blvd.

Meeting Place #2: The end of 128th St. north of Via Linda

Meeting Place #3: Lost Dog Trailhead lot at 124th St. north of Via Linda

Meeting Place #4: The lot at 104th St. just south of McDowell Mountain Ranch Rd.

Meeting Place #5: Trailhead staging lot in the park off Fountain Hills Blvd. \$5 per car entrance fee

Saturday, March 29, 8:30 a.m.—Cholla Mountain Loop. Our prettiest long hike goes about 8 miles through varied, rolling desert terrain. A good mix of exercise and sightseeing. About 4 hours. Meet at #1

Sunday, March 30, 8:30 a.m.—Balanced Rock. A 4-mile roundtrip visits a striking rock formation. See a native juniper tree, a holdover from an earlier era. Mild inclines only. About 2 1/2 hours. Meet at #1

Saturday, April 5, 8 a.m.—The Microdesert; Plants and Animals. Learn how tiny, usually overlooked organisms have a big affect on the desert ecosystem in a 4-mile roundtrip to Brown's Ranch. Meet at #1

Sunday, April 6, 8 a.m.—Scenic Trail in McDowell Mountain Regional Park. A 4.8-mile loop offers unique between-mountain views and long vistas. Mild inclines only. About 3 hrs. Meet at #5

Saturday, April 12, 8 a.m.—Talesin Overlook via the Quartz Trail. A 5-mile roundtrip climbs gradually about 500 feet to a saddle overlooking Frank Lloyd Wright's architectural complex. About 3 hours. Meet at #4

Sunday, April 13, 8 a.m.—Desert Park Loop. A 5.7-mile hike skirts Horseshoe Mountain and rises 700 feet in the Gateway area. Climbing is on gradual grades. About 3.5 hours. Meet at #4

Saturday, April 19, 8 a.m.—Trail Mix. Learn about the edible plants of the Sonoran Desert in a 5.7-mile loop hike to Cathedral Rocks, a Native People's gathering place. Mild inclines only. About 3.5 hours. Meet at #1

Sunday, April 20, 8 a.m.—Cactus Trail. Our prettiest short trail loops 3.2 miles along Little Granite Mountain past some of the finest stands of saguaro cactus extant. About 3 hours. Meet at #1

Saturday, April 26, 8 a.m.—Amphitheater. A 5.5-mile loop hike in the state trust land visits an interesting rock formation offering fine views all around. Mild inclines only. About 3 hours. Meet at #1

Sunday, April 27, 8 a.m.—Photography Walk. Hone your photo skills with our experts on the scenic Lost Dog Wash Trail. No set distance. Mild inclines only. Bring your camera. About 2.5 hours. Meet at #3

Focus on Conservation

Photography Contest
2008

Take your best shot and enjoy
a beautiful spring day in the Preserve.

Three \$250 awards will be presented for "Best of Show", "Best Color", and "Best Macro" as well as three winners (one for each division of professional, amateur and youth) in each of the following categories: Fauna, Flora, Landscape, and People.

Photos should be taken between April 1 and 30, 2008 and submitted by 5 p.m. on May 15, 2008.

A panel of experts will judge entries on both technical and artistic merit. Winning entries will be those whose overall impact best captures the McDowell Sonoran Preserve as a natural treasure to be protected and preserved.

Winners will be announced June 1, 2008. Select entries will be exhibited at the Scottsdale Center for the Arts in October as part of McDowell Sonoran Month.



Category: Fauna; George Andrejko

Entry Guidelines

- Participants must submit an 8"x10" print of an image from within the Preserve.
- No date stamps please – they will be automatically eliminated from judging.
- Prints will not be returned.
- McDowell Sonoran Conservancy reserves the right to use all photos for any purpose. Photo credit will be provided for each image use.
- MSC will mount photos for public presentation.
- Photos will be displayed at the Scottsdale Center for the Arts during McDowell Sonoran Month in October, 2008 as well as on the MSC website.
- There is no cost to enter.



Category: People; Marianne Wallace

McDowell Sonoran Conservancy 2008 Photo Contest Entry Form

Complete and sign this entry form and attach it to your print.

Deliver your entry in an envelope with your name clearly printed on the outside to the MSC office no later than 5 p.m. on 5/15/08.

Name: _____	Indicate a category for your entry (select only one): <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape <input type="checkbox"/> Fauna <input type="checkbox"/> Flora <input type="checkbox"/> People
Phone: _____	Indicate a division for your entry (select only one): <input type="checkbox"/> Youth (under 18) <input type="checkbox"/> Amateur <input type="checkbox"/> Professional
Email: _____	I have read the entry guidelines and hereby attest that my entry meets the criteria for submission.
Address: _____	Sign: _____
_____	Date: _____

Second Annual MSC Float on the Salt River

Please join us for an exclusive, unique southwestern adventure through the Tonto National Forest, where you can experience an amazing riparian habitat just outside Phoenix.

What better way to enjoy the morning... friends outdoors together, as birds call and other animals come to the river's edge for a drink? With riparian expert Matt Chew, ASU Riparian Biologist we will learn interesting little-known facts about the Salt River's rich and varied plant and wildlife. We may see eagles and other rare birds among the more than 200 species of birds that have been sighted in the area. We will be on the river before tubing season begins, so expect a serene oasis in our warm desert. Planned float time is two and a half hours.

Details:

March 29, 7 a.m. at the MSC office for bus transportation

Cost* is \$75/adults, \$45/child 10 to 15 years old, no children under 10.
*Payment due at registration. Refunds only if cancelled by March 25th.

Register: Call or email Debbie Frey, Office Manager, by March 25th–
480-998-7971x100, debbie@mcdowellsonoran.org



Photos of MSC friends at the first rafting trip in March 2007



Mountain Biking: miles of trails through natural desert and gorgeous views await you in the Preserve. And – we've even left some rocks in the trails for you!

The McDowell Sonoran Preserve offers two distinct regions for the mountain biker. The southern region, currently in the Preserve, and the northern region, within the acquisition boundary for the future of the Preserve. The southern region, with trails such as Sunrise, Lost Dog, Quartz and Paradise, offer moderate challenges with a generally rocky terrain. For a nice introduction to this section start out at the Lost Dog Trailhead. Be aware that on weekends however, this trail will be loaded with hikers too. In addition to these trails, Bell and Windgate provide some challenging passes. These take you up and over the McDowells and connect into McDowell Regional Park. These are best accessed from the Gateway area, at 104th St and Bell Rd. All of the southern region is closed to motorized users. This area sees the most foot traffic, so please yield to all users.

The northern region is generally flatter, with decomposed granite trails. These can tend to ride smoother than those in the south, but have lots of moguls and ruts which offer their own challenge. The best access points for these trails are: (1) the intersection of Pima and Dynamite roads, (2) the north end of Alma School Rd, 1 mile north of Dynamite Rd, or (3) 136th Street, two miles north of Dynamite Rd. Granite Mountain Multi-use Area trail maps can be found at each of these locations. The north area offers an opportunity to see the beauty of the lush high Sonoran Desert. It is full of modern and ancient history including Brown's Ranch, Cathedral Rocks, The Amphitheater, and Balanced Rock. This region is State Trust Land, so don't forget your permit and remember most trails are open to dirt bikes and jeeps.

In the Preserve you can have a great experience whether your ride is 30 minutes or all day. Whatever your skill or ability you will want to come back and continue to explore the Preserve on your bike.

preserve up close

Tiny Beauty with a Temper

By Ruthie Carll
Executive Director



Female velvet ants don't have wings and therefore, are flightless. They have stingers, however, and can pack quite a powerful sting. After mating, females can be found crawling on the ground searching for the burrows

One of my favorite insects to spot while on a hike is the velvet ant. These tiny insects actually are wasps. There are more than 30 species of velvet ants in the Sonoran Desert. Velvet ants are diurnal – active during the day and easy to spot on the trail. Adults normally reach about a half- inch in length but can be as long as an inch. Their heads, thorax and legs are covered with black hair while the hair on their abdomen is bright red-orange. There is one variety, however, that is covered in white hair and could be mistaken for a creosote seed with legs!

of ground-dwelling, solitary wasps. Their goal is to slip into the other wasp's burrow, lay eggs on the larva and slip out unnoticed. When the velvet ant is caught in the act, the owner of the burrow may try to sting her. That usually has no effect because her exoskeleton is extremely hard. When the velvet ant larva hatches it will consume the host wasp's larva. The final adult size of the velvet ant will depend on the size of this first meal. 🐜

ask an expert

Q: How do mountains form? *Dellan, 10 years old*

A: Geology is one of my favorite topics. The surface of the earth is divided into several huge, thick slabs called tectonic plates. These enormous plates are floating on the molten liquid rock in the interior of the earth. These plates are moving very slowly - just an inch or two a year – and they are moving in different directions. Can you guess what is going to happen next?

These big huge plates collide! I know what you're thinking, "Big deal. They're moving so slowly. It's not like they are going to crash." Actually – they are going to crash. Because the plates are so big, once they start moving, they are hard to stop. When they collide, it is slow but powerful. The edges smash together and are forced to wrinkle up or down.

Once mountains have formed, they actually start to shrink. For example, the McDowell Mountains—which were formed millions of years ago-- aren't growing any taller. In fact, rain and wind are wearing them away so they are actually getting smaller. As the soil and rocks fall to the base of the mountains, they pile up. This pile is called the bajada.



Next time you have a good view of the McDowells, look for the gentle slope of the bajada. Because the bajada is a good place for plants to find root, this area is often green.

Mountains are a vital place in the desert. Their cliffs, canyons, washes, and slopes all provide different habitat for plants and animals. There is a lot more to learn about them too. I'm glad you asked about them!

by Dan Gruber, MSC Master Steward

Interview With a Scientist

Kelli L. Larson

Assistant Professor of Geography
Global Institute of Sustainability (GIoS)
Arizona State University Tempe, AZ 85287-0104



MSC believes that encouraging scientists to focus their research on local subjects will significantly benefit the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. The Preserve is a key urban/wildland interface. Our understanding and monitoring of its ecological integrity allows us to move rapidly to address any existing problems and anticipate future ones. MSC is pleased to partner with local scientists to explore issues concerning the Preserve.

Dr. Larson's work addresses people's relationship with the environment and natural resources, with focus on such issues as water conservation in metropolitan Phoenix. Our intern, Dan MacLean, caught up with Kelli and asked her the questions below.

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

A: From my perspective, the McDowell Sonoran Preserve is important not only for protecting our region's native desert ecosystem, but also because it provides a natural refuge from our hectic daily lives, where we can take healthful walks, clear our minds from stress, and experience life's wondrous treasures.

In a book called "Wild in the City," Houck and Cody gracefully modify Thoreau's popular adage by stating, "In livable cities is the preservation of the wild." This view is important because it recognizes that by connecting people with nature in urban areas - where the vast majority of us live - special places like the McDowell Sonoran Preserve help protect natural areas both within and beyond cities by fostering people's connections with nature and thereby establishing support for resource protection in cities and elsewhere.

Q: Why are you passionate about your field of study?

A: So often, environmental matters are oversimplified as choices between natural resource protection and economic growth and development. I believe that by focusing on the 'human dimensions' of environmental systems, I can move beyond such polarized views to understand a diversity of perspectives that help move us toward sustaining nature, our livelihoods and the

strong (if often latent) sense of stewardship that is an important part of our personal identity and our cultural heritage.

Q: How does your job impact nature and/or the Preserve?

A: I believe in the 'three pillars' of the academy - research, teaching and service. My work allows me to contribute to natural resource management and environmental sustainability by highlighting and advancing knowledge about public support for particular efforts and barriers to specific conservation activities.

Q: How do you think local residents-- kids and adults-- can make a difference in saving the natural environment or, specifically, the Sonoran Desert?

A: Through experiencing these places, appreciating them, and passing the fervor along to others, and by connecting these special places to other critical environmental issues in our urban environment, such as preserving desert landscapes through the metropolitan area, using wisely our scarce water resources, and doing our individual part to reduce air pollution.

Q: If you were trying to explain to a non-scientist why the Preserve is important, what would you say?

A: In urban preserves is the cultivation and sustainability of the human spirit.

Preservation Partners

The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy is proud of the support we receive from corporate, community, public and private foundations, and recognizes this support through our Preservation Partners program. Through financial contributions and by joining with MSC on volunteer work projects, Preservation Partners acknowledge the public value of the vital work we do. Our partners recognize that the Preserve creates economic benefits for the community. They enable people who live or work near the Preserve to enjoy a healthier and more-sustainable lifestyle. Educational and recreational activities offered by MSC in the Preserve help to strengthen our community and focus its attention on the necessity of preserving the open spaces that contribute so significantly to our lifestyle.

Preservation Partners enjoy the benefits of visibility and prestige to a targeted audience of more than 200,000 local residents and thousands of Scottsdale visitors. Sponsors receive significant recognition in the Conservancy's promotional and marketing materials. We also are able to provide a variety of unique opportunities to connect clients and employees with the Sonoran Desert and its mountains.

For more information about the Preservation Partner program, please contact Linda Raish at (480) 998-7971, extension 101.

MSC Preservation Partner Profile *The Dorrance Family Foundation*

Through a \$25,000 grant to support MSC's volunteer programs, the Dorrance Family Foundation recently joined our growing number of Preservation Partners.

Its gift recognizes the importance of volunteers to the organization and provides the support needed to grow our programs in response to the Preserve's increasing patrol and maintenance needs. Increased training for new volunteers, advanced training for present stewards and MSC's volunteer-recognition and steward-retention efforts all will go to meet this objective.

As are our other Preservation Partners, the Dorrance Family Foundation is committed to strengthening communities. We are very grateful for its generosity and belief that preserving vital open space is important for this and future generations.

MSC Preservation Partner Profile Jan Bennett, APS

Jan Bennett spends most of his recreational time fishing these days, but as a younger man he liked to scale the various peaks of Scottsdale's McDowell Mountains.

"I think I climbed most of them at least once," he says. "There's nothing like being up high near sunset with the whole Valley at your feet."

Mr. Bennett, and his employer, still do their part to preserve uncluttered vistas in this area. He's Senior Vice President for Energy Delivery for APS, the power-company subsidiary of Pinnacle West Capital Corp., which has been a consistent supporter of the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy.

APS's ties with MSC go back some 20 years, to when Jane Rau, one of MSC's founders, knocked on the company's door seeking funds to launch the fledgling group. "She was quite persuasive," Mr. Bennett recalls with a smile. "She still is."

Partly at his urging, APS became MSC's first major donor, supplying the seed money that got the organization up and running. For a while it offered to match other contributions to the then McDowell Sonoran Land Trust. At another time it co-sponsored the black-tie Mountain Ball, an early fund-raising event.

More recently the company made a considerable donation to help MSC furnish the new office it occupied last year, and is a Preservation Partner for its ongoing support. Its employees have made themselves available for MSC's work projects. Few companies' links go deeper.

Mr. Bennett's responsibilities include the placement of electrical transmission and distribution lines that serve the nation's fastest-growing service territory, and in that capacity he has faced MSC representatives across the bargaining table. He characterizes the relationship as more cooperative than adversarial. "Our objective is to build our lines in the least disruptive manner," he avers. "We can't make everybody happy all the time, but we try. We think we've pretty much succeeded, with the help of MSC and other community organizations."

The executive, who has been with APS for 41 years ("sometimes I think I was born in my office," he says), is an Arizona native who attended Paradise Valley High School and Glendale Community College.

"I think that growing up in the Valley helps me appreciate what we have here in the way of natural heritage, and why it's important to preserve it," he declares. "MSC has played no small role in this. When you look at what it has accomplished, you only can conclude that helping it is worthwhile."



McDowell Sonoran Society

There's a new opportunity to help the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy carry out our work! It's the McDowell Sonoran Society, for those whose annual giving to our organization exceeds \$1,500.

The Society will be composed of people whose commitment to preserving our community's vital open spaces far exceeds the ordinary. Funds raised by the Society will go to support the full range of MSC programs that educate the public on the importance of land preservation, maintain the city-owned McDowell Sonoran Preserve and provide opportunities for healthful outdoor recreation to persons of all ages. Contributions also will provide the resources to enable us to increase our partnerships with schools and youth groups that will ensure that our mission will be perpetuated. Your help is essential now because the coming year will be crucial to our drive to complete the Preserve for this and future generations.

Members of the McDowell Sonoran Society will have the opportunity to go on special hikes, attend lectures and briefings by experts on environmental issues and be invited to guided trips to areas of our region that have particular beauty and ecological importance. Your gift will be recognized in



photo: Adam Rodriguez

our publications and your title of Founding Member of the Society always will be inscribed in our records. Most important, your example will be a beacon that will lead others to the conservation cause.

For more information on the McDowell Sonoran Society, please contact Linda Raish at (480) 998-7971 ext. 101.

Meet Linda Raish, MSC's Community Development Director

Linda Raish views her position as a "friend raiser".

"Development is about creating a relationship with a donor or volunteer that can be sustained year after year. It's providing opportunities for people to really get involved in what they are passionate about. It's the life-blood of philanthropy."

Linda has been putting that definition to work for the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy since October, when she became MSC's community development director. She brings to the task a solid background in such diverse organizations as Habitat for Humanity, Arizona State University and the Desert Botanical Garden in Phoenix.

Along with her professional expertise is a passion for environmental protection that will strike a familiar chord with MSC's volunteers and donors. "I love the desert and appreciate how fragile it is," says Linda, who lives in Cave Creek with her husband Randy, daughter Callie, 13, and son Dellan, 10. Linda says she intends to explore every avenue to raise the money MSC needs to carry out and expand its programs.



"What we've accomplished—the whole Preserve—is real and tangible. The fact it exists is extraordinary and I am glad to be a part of it."

She continues: "Engagement with our work will drive public awareness, and that awareness will drive more engagement. Once the process begins it will benefit us in many ways, including financial. Companies and other groups that sign

up with us as workers may become donors. They'll tell their friends and the circle will grow."

Linda thinks that once its message of hands-on community service becomes widespread, MSC will be even more widely recognized in the Scottsdale community. She plans to build on what she calls the group's "undeniable legitimacy and success."

Leave a Legacy with the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy

The Legacy Circle honors supporters who have chosen to support the MSC through a planned gift, a memorial or tribute gift, a gift to support the Preservation Endowment or a gift of land. By making a Legacy Gift you are making an important choice to protect and steward our areas most important conservation lands. There are many different gift-giving options, and a number of them offer significant tax and income benefits for you as the donor. We recommend that you consult with your financial adviser about which method may be best for you.

Your generosity through a legacy gift will help protect our land now and ensure that it will be protected in perpetuity, so future generations can experience the benefits of this living treasure. Please contact Linda Raish at linda@mcdowellsonoran.org for more information about the Legacy Circle.

"In addition to all of our other activities, we must plan for the future of our preservation programs in a fiscally responsible manner. After careful research, we have determined that an endowment is the best tool to ensure the Preserve will always have strong community advocates." MSC Board of Directors



photo: Adam Rodriguez

The great use of life is to spend it for something that will outlast it.

- William James, American philosopher

Become a friend of MSC

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... either through our website at www.mcdowellsonoran.org or by returning the membership form below.

Please accept my gift of:

\$1,500 \$1,000 \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 Other: _____

I have enclosed a check (Please make checks payable to MSC)

Please charge my credit card Credit Card # _____

Exp. Date _____ CVV # _____ (Visa / MC / AmEx / Discover)

Mail to:
MSC
16435 N. Scottsdale Rd.
Suite 110
Scottsdale, AZ 85254

Thank you for your support!

By joining the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy, you will ensure that the McDowell Sonoran Preserve continues to be a pristine open space to visit and enjoy, as well as a permanent sanctuary for wildlife.

MSC Honor Roll

We gratefully acknowledge all our supporters
(For gifts and pledges received July 1, 2007 through December 31, 2007)

\$1500 and above

(Founding members of the McDowell Sonoran Society)

Anonymous
Bobby and Susan Alpert
Don Basta
Brad and Lisa Berry
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\$100-\$499

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\$1-\$99

(Hiker Circle)

Although too many to list, we thank each one of the generous members of the Hiker Circle!

Preservation Partners

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news and notes

MSC has a new Website!

Thanks to the generosity of Mission eCommerce and the time and talents of MSC Steward and Board Member Craig Palmer, MSC has launched our new website!

"We hope this website will be a vehicle that connects people to the Preserve. We developed the website to be functional—a dynamic tool for people interested in learning more about the Preserve and our organization" says Ruthie Carll, MSC Executive Director.

One highlight of the site is an interactive trail map with access points and trailheads marked along Preserve trails. Each point has a pop-up window with a description and comments from MSC Stewards.

Visitors to the site will find an interactive calendar, resources about desert plants and animals, and a page that helps prepare you prior to visiting the Preserve. A retail store and donation page will help to support MSC's work. There are also secure information-sharing pages for MSC board members and stewards.

Check it out at www.mcdowellsonoran.org

