

m c d o w e l l s o n o r a n c o n s e r v a n c y

Mountain Lines



25th Anniversary Edition





Mike Nolan, Executive Director

This issue of Mountain Lines is not like any of the editions that preceded it. This one is a double issue, and it celebrates a McDowell Sonoran Conservancy milestone: our 25th anniversary as an organization.

On January 17, 1991, Karen Bertiger and Jane Rau signed the articles of incorporation for the McDowell Sonoran Land Conservancy, which were filed on January 21 creating a new nonprofit Arizona corporation. Karen and Jane (who is still an active Board member at age 93), along with Peter Chasar, constituted the initial Board of Directors. In its early years the organization did business under the name McDowell Sonoran Land Trust.

These three directors and a small group of citizens founded the Conservancy to address a shared concern: the need to protect the McDowell Mountains and surrounding desert as natural open space for future generations to enjoy and appreciate. They dreamed of forming a land trust, and raising money to purchase land that the organization would hold in public trust: a popular notion of "land conservation through private action."

It readily became apparent that the task of raising enough funds to preserve the McDowell's was beyond the capacity of a small group of citizens raising private funds. Success would require citizen support through their city government.

So the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy, the Conservancy, evolved into an advocacy organization, and its directors set about working to convince Scottsdale citizens, council members, corporations, land owners, developers, and anyone else who would listen that the preservation of the McDowells was important, and that, as citizens, the natural desert was our heritage and should be protected for future generations.

They were successful. The Scottsdale City Council formed a McDowell Sonoran Preserve Task Force, agreed on boundaries for the new Preserve, and established it legally through a new ordinance. To fund land acquisition, a new 0.20% sales tax was proposed and approved by Scottsdale voters. Later council action expanded the Preserve boundaries to the north, and voters approved an additional 0.15% sales tax for acquisition and Preserve amenities such

as trailheads, trails, and the like. The Preserve acquisition effort was underway.

Meanwhile the Conservancy was beginning to turn its attention to a new challenge: educating citizens about the new Preserve through public hikes, and helping to build and maintain trails for safe access. Volunteers were needed for this work and soon were being actively recruited and led by Chet Andrews, "Steward Number One" to many. Under Chet's guidance a group of volunteers arose, who took their name from the work they did: stewards of the Preserve.

As the steward program grew, training became important, and stewards organized around regions of the Preserve. Since the first steward class in November 1998, more than 1,000 citizens have gone through our orientation and training program, and more than 500 are still actively recording hours for MSC. In 2010, stewards reorganized themselves into programs based on activity, which continues as the organizing principle today.

In 2010, realizing that the flora and fauna of the Preserve was poorly known, the Conservancy secured a three-year grant from the Nina Mason Pulliam Trust to conduct an ecological inventory. Our commitment to Pulliam was not only to complete the inventory, but also to use the results to launch a Field Institute dedicated to applying specific scientific knowledge to Preserve management. A citizen science program evolved out of the steward programs to provide highly skilled technical support to the research program. Today, results of the Conservancy research have been published in peer-reviewed technical journals, and scientists from around the valley have designed and led projects to understand the natural communities, human impacts, invasive species, and other critical environmental issues that affect the Preserve's health.

The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy today - devoted primarily to science-based stewardship, educational hikes and programming, visitor welcoming and safety, and overall excellence in urban preserve management and volunteer training and deployment—is in some ways worlds always from the grass-roots advocacy group of 25 years ago. But at its core, the Conservancy is still an organization that runs on passion for the Preserve, for protecting the land, and sharing its values with the community. As a steward, donor, friend, community member, this is your organization. I hope as we celebrate our silver anniversary you enjoy this retrospective that looks at a few of the key points in our evolution. 

About Us

The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy champions the sustainability of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve for the benefit of this and future generations. As stewards, we connect the community to the Preserve through education, research, advocacy, partnerships and safe, respectful access.

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Morning in the McDowells

By Bob Frost, Scottsdale Poet Laureate

Early morning sun shafts spike through mountain peaks lighting up the haloed prickly pear and stately saguaro, while wisps of pink clouds on a blue backdrop angle away and south to where the sky is not yet ready for day.

I find myself pausing more than walking,
Listening more than thinking,
Seeing more than watching, and...
Feeling more than usual.

Being careful not to tumble small rocks in my path or brush the prickly branch of the Foothill Palo Verde, I look for new experiences.

The color of light as it dances through a Chuparosa bush, the song of a sage thrasher and smell of the dew moistened desert mountain floor elevate my spirits.

I find myself wishing more than dreaming,
Leaving footprints rather than words,
Being more random than focused,
Feeling more alive than usual.

Perched on a grainy lichen-colored boulder, I watch the sun warm the desert floor, lighting its path with yellow brittlebush. I wish that I were all of us so that we could embrace this moment as one. We could hear, see, feel, smell and be together as this rather normal dawn renews its world.

We would feel more peaceful than angry
Hear more than one heart beating,
See more than our reflection.
We would feel more than usual.



Twenty-five years ago, a handful of ordinary people decided they needed to save the McDowell Mountains and its surrounding desert from development. Armed with this mission, they incorporated themselves as the McDowell Sonoran Land Trust (MSLT) on January 21, 1991. Jane Rau, one of the founding members, said their goal was “to act as an advocacy group to have the McDowell Mountains and portions of the Sonoran Desert set aside for the enjoyment of all future generations”. Another member, Chet Andrews, after investigating the patchwork of land ownership around the McDowell Mountains, came up with the idea that the City of Scottsdale should buy the land, and that negotiations with private landowners could be started to also do land exchanges.

Spreading a message to “save our desert”, the MSLT succeeded in convincing the City of Scottsdale (COS) to preserve the mountains and its surrounding desert before it was too late. The COS and the MSLT worked on forging alliances with tribal governments, surrounding municipalities, Maricopa County, the State Land Department, enlightened developers, hotel operators, business people and a large percentage of the

citizens of Scottsdale. They joined the City of Scottsdale in promoting the successful passage of multiple sales taxes and revenue bonds that provided the money to buy the land. They worked at the state level to promote the signing of the Arizona Preserve Initiative into law – a law that gave the City of Scottsdale staff the tools needed to buy the land.

As time went by and their membership grew, their vision grew even bolder. It broadened to include additional land to the north of the McDowell Mountains up to the border of the Tonto National Forest. This enlarged area would be a sustainable ecosystem and provide a corridor for large wildlife.

As the land purchases for the Preserve accumulated, advocacy became less important and management of the Preserve came to the forefront. So, MSLT changed its name to the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy. The Conservancy began to train volunteers to steward the land and eventually signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Scottsdale that outlined the Conservancy’s responsibilities in managing the Preserve.

Twenty-five years after their first meeting, the Conservancy founders accomplished their goal and much more. The mindset of the people of Scottsdale became one of preservation. The McDowell Sonoran Preserve is one-third of the City of Scottsdale and the largest urban preserve in the world. It is a priceless legacy held in trust for the people forever. These ordinary people accomplished an extraordinary feat.

In this commemorative issue of the Mountain Lines, you will meet some of those who helped to create our magnificent Preserve and some of the countless volunteers in the Conservancy and other organizations that have stewarded the Preserve for the past 25 years.



1990

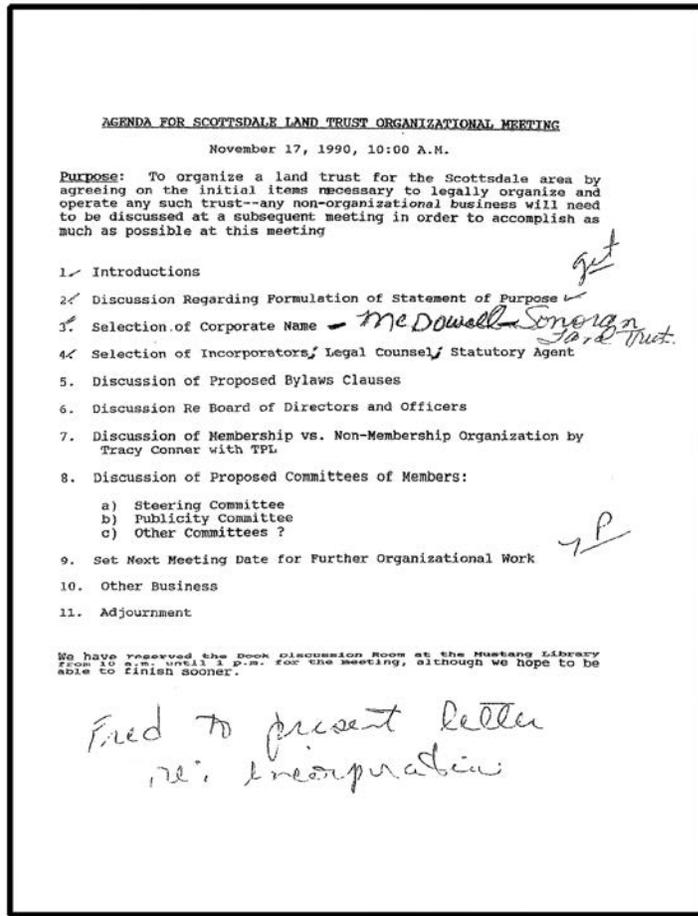
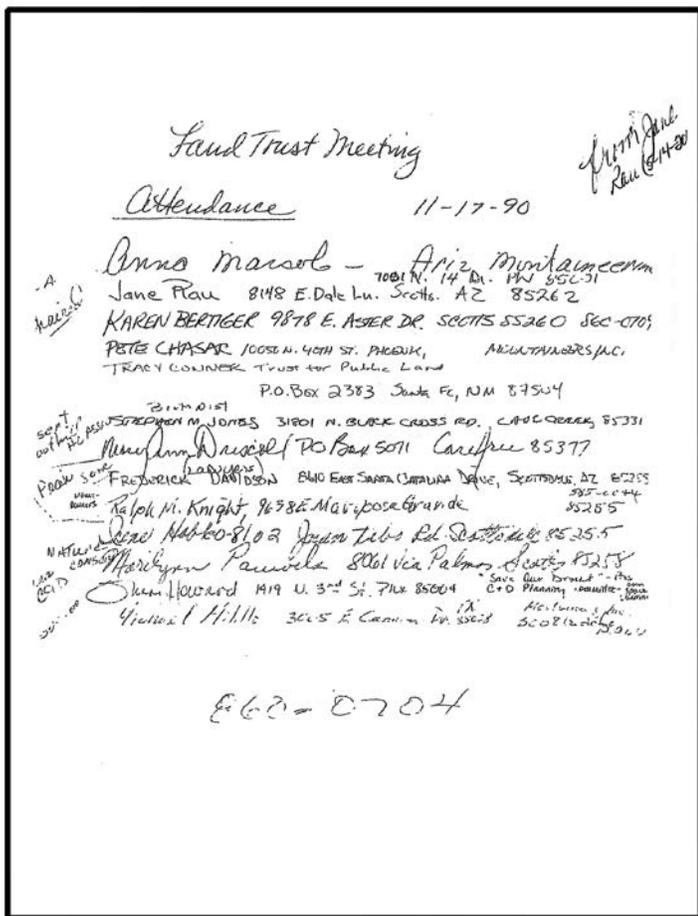
Creating a Land Trust

1990 witnessed urban development rapidly spreading into the Sonoran Desert and McDowell Mountains of Scottsdale. As the urban encroachment into the pristine desert escalated, concerned area citizens realized that if they did not act, this magnificent treasure could be lost forever. As Jane Rau, one of those who saw the approaching devastation said recently, "It made me almost cry to see beautiful saguaros and plants bulldozed out of the ground and destroyed."

Preservation-minded and concerned Scottsdale area residents decided to act and met on November 17 at the Mustang Library to form a land trust to preserve land in the Scottsdale area from encroaching urban development. Those attending - Anna M. Marsolo (Arizona Mountaineering member), Jane

Rau, Karen Bertiger, Pete Chasar (Mountaineers, Inc. member), Tracy Conner (Trust for Public Land), Stephen M. Jones (botanist), Mary Ann Driscoll, Frederick Davidson (attorney), Ralph M. Knight, Irene Habbo, Marilyn Pauwels (Nature Conservancy), and Howard and Michael Milillo - agreed on the initial points necessary to legally organize and operate the trust.

Although the atmosphere was charged and full of enthusiasm, the attendees agreed to focus only on forming the organization, and to leave other business to subsequent meetings. Moving forward with the decision to develop a land trust, the attendees selected a name, the McDowell Sonoran Land Trust, and agreed to urge protection of the McDowell Mountains from further development. 🐦



1991



The Land Trust Incorporates

1991 was a busy year for Land Trust founders. They incorporated themselves as a legal entity, the McDowell Sonoran Land Trust, and began advocacy efforts to save the McDowell Mountains and surrounding Sonoran Desert. On January 21, Jane Rau and Karen Bertiger signed the state of Arizona incorporation documents.

At its meeting on March 13, Land Trust members elected Pete Chasar as chair, Karen Bertiger as treasurer and Jane Rau as secretary. They also filled three other important positions. Sue Adams became chair of the Public Information Committee, Tom Adams became chair of the Land Selection Criteria Committee, and Marilyn Pauwels became chair of the Fund Raising Committee. Fred Davidson continued as corporate counsel.

On May 20, the group received its nonprofit tax-exempt status as a 501(c)(3) corporation from the Internal Revenue Service. At this point the McDowell Sonoran Land Trust began urging the mayor and Scottsdale City Council to seriously consider preservation of the McDowell Mountains and surrounding Sonoran Desert.

To encourage community support and raise public awareness, founders began to host hikes into the proposed preserve so that residents and others could see first-hand the urgency to save the land. Growing community understanding and support fueled continuing conversations with the city government and land developers to cooperatively set aside land for future generations. 🌿

Hikes into the Preserve increase community awareness of the need to protect and preserve the land.

1992

Preserve Advocacy Grows

McDowell Sonoran Land Trust advocates expanded their message beyond Scottsdale City Hall during 1992. Land Trust Chair Pete Chasar and a U.S. Bureau of Land Management representative moved the effort forward by meeting with the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors and recreation officials to explore how land swaps could potentially help preserve McDowell Mountain land.

All of this activity by community activists attracted the attention of the local media. Land Trust advocates and volunteers took countless reporters, columnists and photographers on hikes in the McDowell Mountains and surrounding desert. There was hardly any need to explain the need for the creation of a preserve. The magnificent Sonoran landscape with its

abundant cacti, trees, and shrubs along with the resident animals stood in sharp contrast to the encroaching development.

Rather than taking the adversarial tactic of pitting pro-growth and preservation efforts, volunteer and city-appointed citizen groups invited all interested parties to plan how to preserve the McDowell Mountains and surrounding Sonoran Desert.

Throughout the year, new Board Members Chet Andrews, John Nichols, Steve Voss, Joyce Hall, Andrea Forman, Peter and Anne Neisser, Greg Woodall and Carla were appointed to the Land Trust board. Peter Chasar later resigned as chair and Chet Andrews took over the position. 🐦

Brown's Mountain in the background surrounded by Sonoran Desert.



Scottsdale Commissions a Task Force

Early in 1993, Mayor Herb Drinkwater urged the Scottsdale City Council to form a task force to identify what land should be designated to form a preserve, and then to recommend ways to fund the effort. The Council responded by forming the McDowell Mountains Task Force on March 15.

Local business leader and equestrian, Virginia Korte, headed the Task Force. Bob Cafarella, the City of Scottsdale's preserve director, assisted the sixteen-member task force. Charged with defining public interest and goals for the McDowell Mountains, the group went to work to recommend a plan of action. It would take more than six months of hard work before the task force would present its final report to the City Council in October.

The McDowell Sonoran Land Trust moved forward to expand awareness by launching a newsletter called Mountain Lines in June. The new magazine was full of stories and content about the McDowell Mountains and surrounding Sonoran Desert. Land Trust Board Member Carol Schatt (Shilling) edited the publication for many years. The Land Trust also started a "Friends of the McDowells" membership program to garner support for the conservancy and the advocacy effort. That same year, Board Members Chet Andrews and Greg Woodall started a regular, free weekend hiking program that would bring thousands of citizens and future supporters to the land envisioned for the preserve. 🐦



McDowell Mountain Task Force lead by equestrian Virginia Korte.

1994

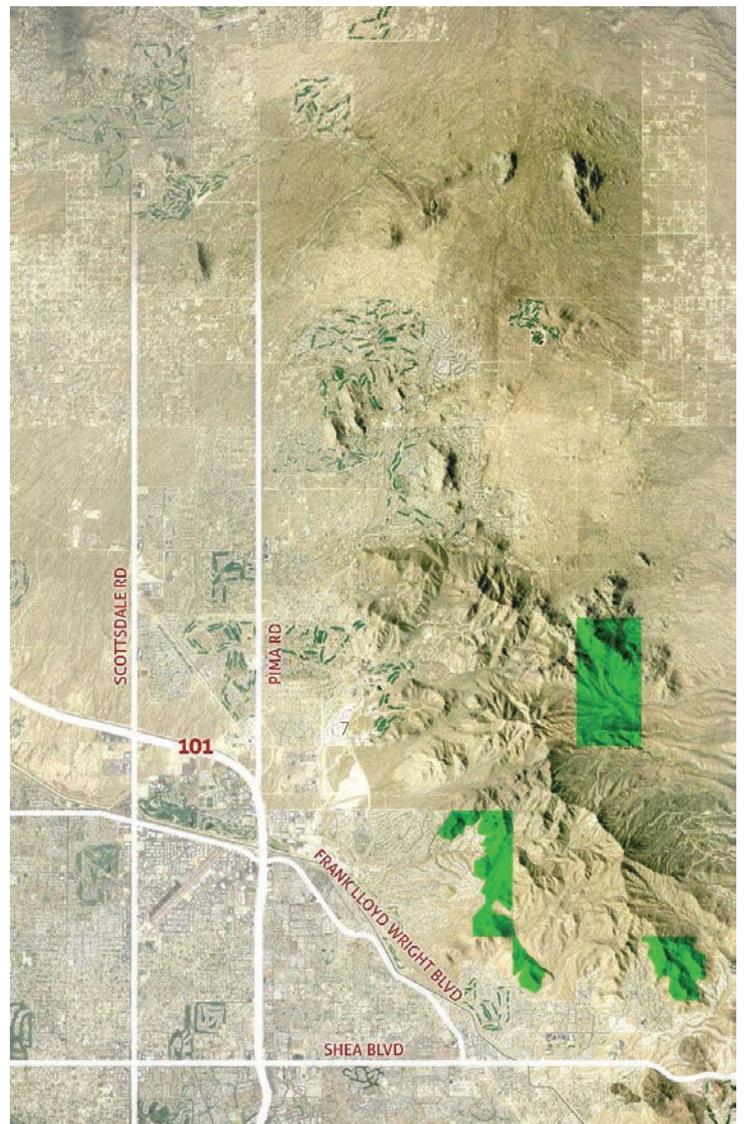
Formal Creation of the Preserve

1994 was an exciting year for Land Trust founders. On Oct. 3, one year after the McDowell Mountains Task Force presented its report to the Scottsdale City Council, the Council held an outdoor session at WestWorld. The creation of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve was the major agenda item. It was a festive occasion with Bill Ensign, Chairperson of the Land Trust, and Mayor Herb Drinkwater leading the council members on a horseback ride in the Preserve prior to the meeting.

Many Preserve advocates spoke at the Council meeting, including Mayor Herb Drinkwater, members of the City Council, Mary Manross and Robert Pettycrew, and Chair of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission Art DeCabooteer. An historic Scottsdale event followed the speeches when the Scottsdale City Council formally dedicated the original McDowell Sonoran Preserve. The newly formed Preserve was

4.5 square miles (2,860 acres) consisting of three parcels of city-owned land. The three parcels were approximately 891 acres south of Bell Road near 120th Street dedicated to the City by Newhall Land & Farming Co. and previous owners, the Herberger family; 689 acres near 136th Street and Thunderbird Road dedicated to the City by SunCor Development Co.; and approximately two square miles north of Union Hills Drive along the City's eastern border. 

Preserve Land Acquisitions Through 1994.



25 Years Stewarding This Sonoran Desert Wonderland

Thank you and congratulations McDowell Sonoran Conservancy for helping to create and maintain Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve!

Hiking, biking and horseback riding in the amazing Sonoran desert and McDowell Mountains thanks each person past and present who dedicated their time and talent for this and future generations.

Stephen and Joanne Brown

The Path to Preservation

The 1993 formation of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission (MSPC) catalyzed efforts to find the optimal path for preserving land desired for the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. Early preservation advocates, including Jane Rau, Christine Kovach, Carla, Greg Woodall, Chet Andrews and other members of the McDowell Sonoran Land Trust (Land Trust), and other members of the Land Trust, led the early efforts. At a Scottsdale City Council study session in January, MSPC Chair Art DeCabooter recommended that the Council ask voters to approve a sales tax increase to fund land purchases within the 16,460 acre Recommended Study Boundary.

Mayor Herb Drinkwater and City Council Member Mary Manross, who later became mayor and led efforts to continue Preserve expansion, were key City supporters. Drinkwater's daughter, Jamie Drinkwater Buchanan, recalls her father's appreciation for the early Preserve advocates. "He understood that it took lots of voices speaking out and advocating preservation to make it a reality." In one of Mayor Drinkwater's "State of the City" addresses, Buchanan remembers her father stating he hoped that citizens would support a tax initiative to save the McDowells and surrounding desert lands for future generations to enjoy. He presciently described the Preserve as a "true jewel of the desert".

Land Trust volunteers got busy reaching out and raising awareness about the reason for the tax and the benefits of a preserve. One of the ways devised to raise support for the sales tax was ingeniously simple - organize hikes into the proposed preserve land. Volunteers estimate they led about 2,000 hikers,

believing firmly, according to Scottsdale historian Joan Fudala, "that every visitor to the land would be a sure 'yes' vote."

Happily for land preservation advocates, May 23 saw their hard work rewarded with the resounding passage of Scottsdale's "Save Our McDowells" Proposition 400. Voters approved, by a 64 percent to 36 percent margin, a two-tenths of one percent sales tax increase for up to 30 years to "provide funds to supplement private efforts to acquire land for the McDowell Sonoran Preserve for the purpose of maintaining scenic views, preserving plant and wildlife, and supporting our largest industry, tourism, while providing appropriate public access and passive outdoor recreational opportunities for residents and visitors." Looking back, it's clear that the committed efforts of the early Land Trust volunteers were absolutely essential in driving the local preservation movement forward and creating a future vision of Scottsdale that residents could see and support. 🐦



Congratulations on 25 Years of Service to Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve. We are proud to be a part of the journey since 1993 and look forward to the next 25!

The Kovach Family



Creating the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, against almost insurmountable odds, is the greatest accomplishment in the history of our community! Let us all recommit in 2016 to the acquisition of the remaining acres within the Preserve Boundary. Happy 25th Anniversary, MSC!

Mary Manross,
Mayor 2000-2009

1996

The Vision Becomes Reality

Chet Andrews, who would come to be affectionately known as McDowell Sonoran Conservancy “Steward #1”, had been working tirelessly as a preservationist since the 1980s as a member of the Arizona Mountaineer Club. As an avid hiker in the McDowell Mountains, he saw development beginning to creep into his beloved mountains and vowed to do something about it. Andrews, one of the founding members of the McDowell Sonoran Land Trust, began researching land issues surrounding the McDowell Mountains. As he learned about the land ownership, he worried about the fact that “the whole area is owned by a variety of entities with varying degrees of control and protection.” But Andrews’ vision of a city-owned Preserve came to reality with the passage of Proposition 400 in 1995 when voters approved the City to collect funds to buy land in the Preserve with a tax equal to only one additional penny for every five dollars spent in the city.

Andrews then set in motion his next big idea - creating trails inside the Preserve. He created a volunteer stewardship group to build and maintain them. He believed that the citizens of Scottsdale, who agreed to buy the land, deserved the opportunity to explore and enjoy their Preserve.

In 1996, the first trail building and maintenance program began. It used a group of volunteers dedicated to protect and maintain Preserve land to do the work. With fortuitous foresight, the City of Scottsdale had formed an entirely new Preserve Division to reflect City Council priorities and carry out agreed-upon goals and objectives. The new Preserve Director Bob Cafarella was also a preservation advocate and lifelong hiker. Working together with other Scottsdale staff, Andrews and Cafarella recruited nearly 90 volunteers to build a trail for the first outdoor race held inside the Preserve. These volunteers successfully cleared a five-mile desert trail that debuted at the Cactus Cup bike race held March 16-17. It attracted 2,600 mountain bikers and 40,000 spectators.

Afterwards, the trail opened for all hikers, equestrians and recreational mountain bikers. That original trail began at WestWorld, turned south along a dirt road toward the old Verde Canal, crossed east into the McDowell Mountain Ranch community, continued up to Taliesin and then looped back west. Today, parts of the original Cactus Cup trail are integrated into the WestWorld and Taliesin trails. 🐦



Trails open to first mountain bikers in 1996.

1997

Land Trust Advocacy Advances

While land acquisitions by the City continued through the late 1990's, the Land Trust expanded its Preserve advocacy. Stewardship and education programs increased in number and frequency. To manage its growing administrative tasks and responsibilities, the Trust hired Sandy Bahr in 1997 as its first full-time director. When Bahr left the Trust to take a position on the staff of the Sierra Club, Carla became the Trust's executive director, a position she held until 2007.

As a result of incorporating concepts developed by more than 1500 residents and business leaders in CityShape 2020, six guiding principles for land use and planning were adopted: preserve meaningful open space, enhance neighborhoods, advance transportation, seek sustainability, support economic vitality, and value Scottsdale's unique lifestyle and character.

Responding to requests from the Scottsdale Historical Society and many residents, the City Council established the Scottsdale Historic Preservation Commission. To the



Advocates Chet Andrews, Jane Rau, and Greg Woodal begin the Saving Our Mountains and Desert campaign.

delight of Scottsdale citizens, this led to passage of the city's first archeological ordinance with many sites designated for protection located inside the Preserve.

Advocacy and conservation work continued throughout the year. Land trust work on the Preserve and strong community support resulted in Mayor Sam Campana's October 7 dedication of the first public trail in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, the Lost Dog Wash Trail. Following the ceremony, the McDowell Sonoran Land Trust conducted its 100th hike into the Preserve along the new trail.

Lost Dog wash opened in 1997 and is a consistent hiker favorite.




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*Congratulations
McDowell Sonoran
Conservancy
For 25 Years
Protecting and Stewarding
Scottsdale's McDowell
Sonoran Preserve*

Greg Kruzel

A Volunteer Steward Program Launches

Partnering with Scottsdale Community College, the Land Trust began training volunteers called Preserve stewards. During Fall Semester 1998, the College offered its first Preserve stewardship class, "How to Exercise Your Love of the Land". Land Trust Administrator Carla and MLST Board Member Chet Andrews developed, designed and implemented the initial course. Andrews then became the long-time head of the Land Trust steward program.

The Land Trust's *Mountain Lines* magazine described the new course as "preparing volunteers to work on the Preserve, training them in observing changing conditions in the Preserve, reporting violations, removing trash, chatting with visitors, and keeping track of safety and maintenance needs". Experts were brought in to discuss flora and fauna, archaeology and geology,

first aid, fire prevention, community preservation efforts, and stewardship procedures. The newly trained stewards would, in conjunction with the City, become caretakers of the Preserve. The first steward class included Art Agosta, Chet Andrews, Carla, Joan Clark, Jon Coffey, Nancy Dallett, Virginia Dotson, Jim Engstrom, Mary Flick, Janie Gomez-Terry, Lee Johnson, Richard Kautz, Bev Kinsey, Roy Kinsey, Carl Koch, Dick Rosler, Darcey Thomas and Tom Walsh.

The newly trained stewards helped to fulfill the City's promise to give residents and visitors greater access to the Preserve by expanding the Land Trust's hiking program to include mountain biking and equestrian trails. In addition, Land Trust trail builders began to work with the City to plan and build new trails as land was acquired. 🐦

First class of McDowell Sonoran Land Trust Stewards graduated in 1998.



1999

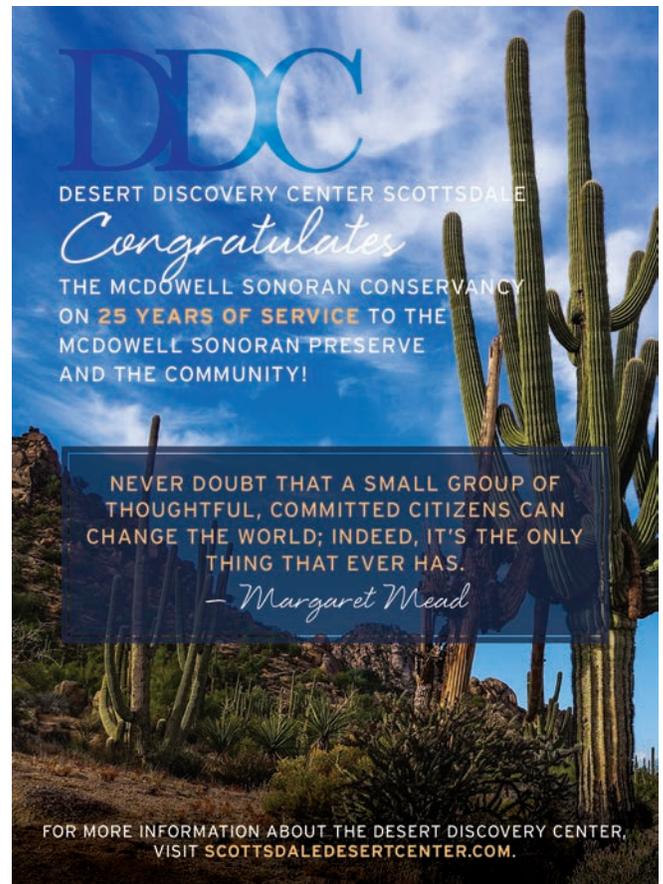
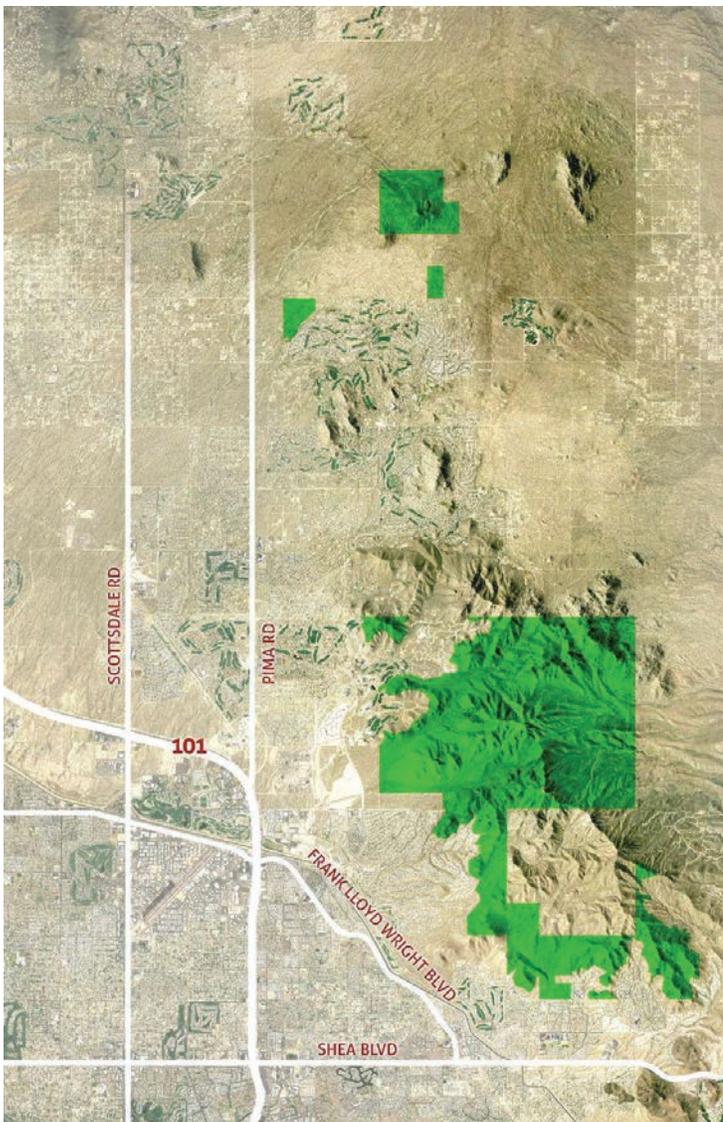
The Preserve Grows

Growing advocacy for Preserve protection got a boost in the 1999 election when 77 percent of Scottsdale voters approved issuance of “general obligation” bonds for Preserve purchases. Public support for the bonds came in large part as a result of a fourth Save Our McDowells campaign co-chaired by Art DeCabooter, Virginia Korte and hotelier Darren Smith. That same year, the City made additional purchases in the southern Lost Dog Wash area, and also bought historic Brown’s Ranch that expanded the northern desert preserve.

Dedicated to fulfilling the promise to increase access for residents and visitors to the Preserve, the Land Trust’s hiking program expanded to include mountain biking and equestrian trails. Working with the City, Land Trust trail builders continued to plan and build access as land was acquired while increasing the number of trails through existing trailheads.

Solely supported by individual, corporate and foundation funding, with no tax dollars being spent, the web of trails grew. The Preserve now offered trail access from WestWorld, McDowell Mountain Ranch and Lost Dog Trailhead. 🐦

Preserve Land Acquisitions Through 1999



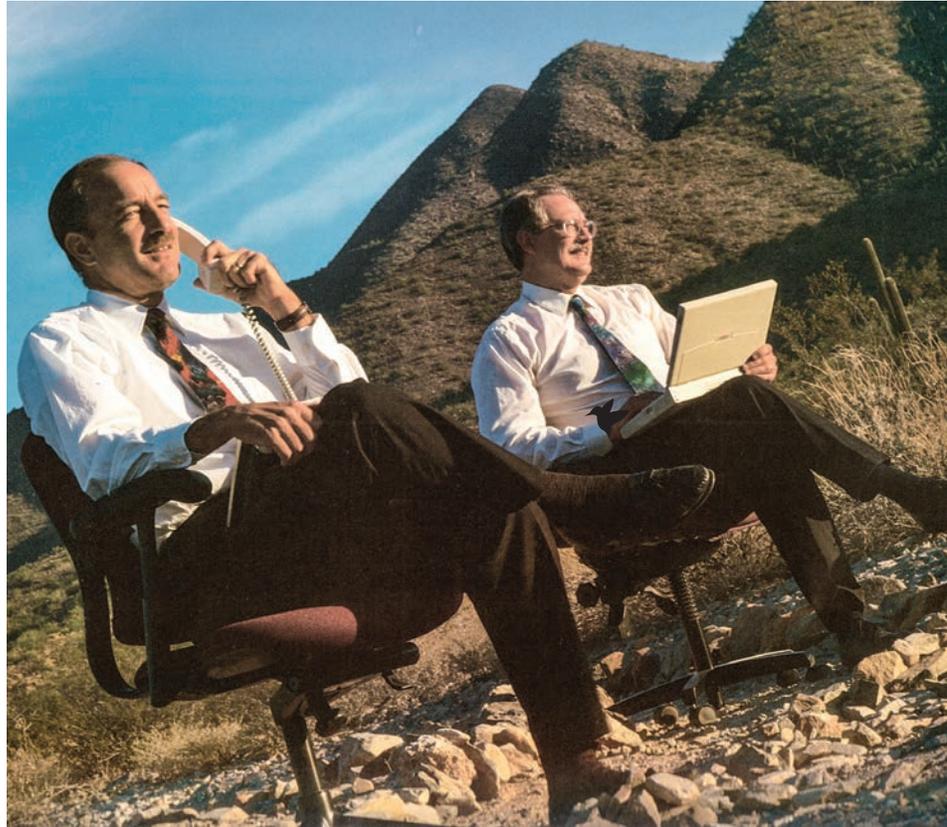
2000

New Rules Spelled Out for the Preserve

In May 2000, five years after the first preserve tax vote, due in part to the continued advocacy of the Land Trust, the City Council passed a new ordinance outlining the scope, purpose and management of the Preserve. The new objectives also outlined rules and regulations regarding its use.

The new rules spelled out clearly what would not be allowed on the Preserve: no motorized vehicles, no littering or illegal dumping, no camping, no fires, no smoking, no glass containers, no firewood collecting, no collecting of natural or archeological materials, no feeding of wildlife, no graffiti and no wandering off-trail.

In June, after Sam Campana opted to not run for re-election, another great advocate for the Preserve, Mary Manross, was elected mayor. With Mayor Manross's background as a two-term council member and parks commissioner, she was well known for her passionate support of the Preserve. Mayor Manross's leadership played an instrumental role in advocating for reform in the state land trust. Her hard work paid off when reclassifications of trust lands within the Preserve study boundary were categorized as "suitable for conservation."



Bob Cafarella (left), City of Scottsdale Preserve Director in the early 1990's and Don Meserve (right) who conducted many Preserve projects.

Preserve Director Bob Cafarella continued working to negotiate the purchase of land in 2000. By the end of the year, he reported to the City Council that the Preserve now consisted of 9,825 acres of city-owned land. 



*Thank you for 25 Years of commitment stewarding Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve for this and future generations.
Virginia Korte*



AMAZING!!
Keep up the great work!!
Eileen and Gary Shapiro

2001



Land Trust Celebrates 10th Anniversary

The McDowell Sonoran Land Trust (MSLT) celebrated the 10th anniversary of its incorporation in 2001. A lot had been achieved over the preceding 10 years, but much more was to come.

Mayor Manross and the Land Trust, led by Executive Director Carla, had spent close to two years building community partnerships and organizing an Arizona Preserve Initiative (API) hearing where more than 1,500 people turned out. During that time thousands of letters were sent in support of the Arizona State Land Department reclassifying state land to grow the Preserve

On February 15, the State Land Department held a public hearing to determine if 16,600 acres of state trust land in northern Scottsdale should be reclassified as "suitable for conservation." On August 30, the State Land Commissioner reclassified 78 percent of the state land (13,021 acres) within the study boundary. Further, public auction of the remaining 22 percent was put on hold giving the City time to explore funding options.

By the end of 2001, there were 665 acres of private land remaining for possible acquisition and inclusion in the proposed 36,400 acre Preserve. But as the economy boomed in 2001, land prices skyrocketed and the need to purchase state land and build trailhead facilities became challenging. It became obvious that the City was going to have to ask the voters for the fifth time for more money and for broader authority to use the existing Preserve tax for Preserve access and improvements. 

Unusual rock formation throughout the McDowell Mountains add to the unique beauty of the Sonoran Desert.

2002

Land Trust Stewards Honored

The State Land Department auctioned 780 acres of state land north of Bell Road on either side of Thompson Peak Parkway in June. 400 of these acres, east of the parkway alignment, were within the Preserve study boundary.

A fourth class of McDowell Sonoran Land Trust Stewards graduated on April 27. In October, Land Trust Stewards were honored by the City for volunteering 4,572 hours over the past year. Stewards were now taking on more duties patrolling and protecting the Preserve, while at the same time saving Scottsdale taxpayer money. 🐦

2003

Steward Education Program Expands

In 2003, with the graduation of the fifth class of McDowell Sonoran Land Trust stewards, the steward cadre numbered approximately 100 trained volunteers. The new training class was the result of a close collaboration between the Conservancy and Scottsdale Community College since 1998.

Over the years, the steward training classes grew to include seven evening sessions and three field trips. Training hike leaders became part of the steward training classes in order to provide better hiking programs to the public. The Land Trust also doubled the number of hikes offered. 🐦

Steward training classes grow the volunteer stewards to approximately 100 and added hike leader training.



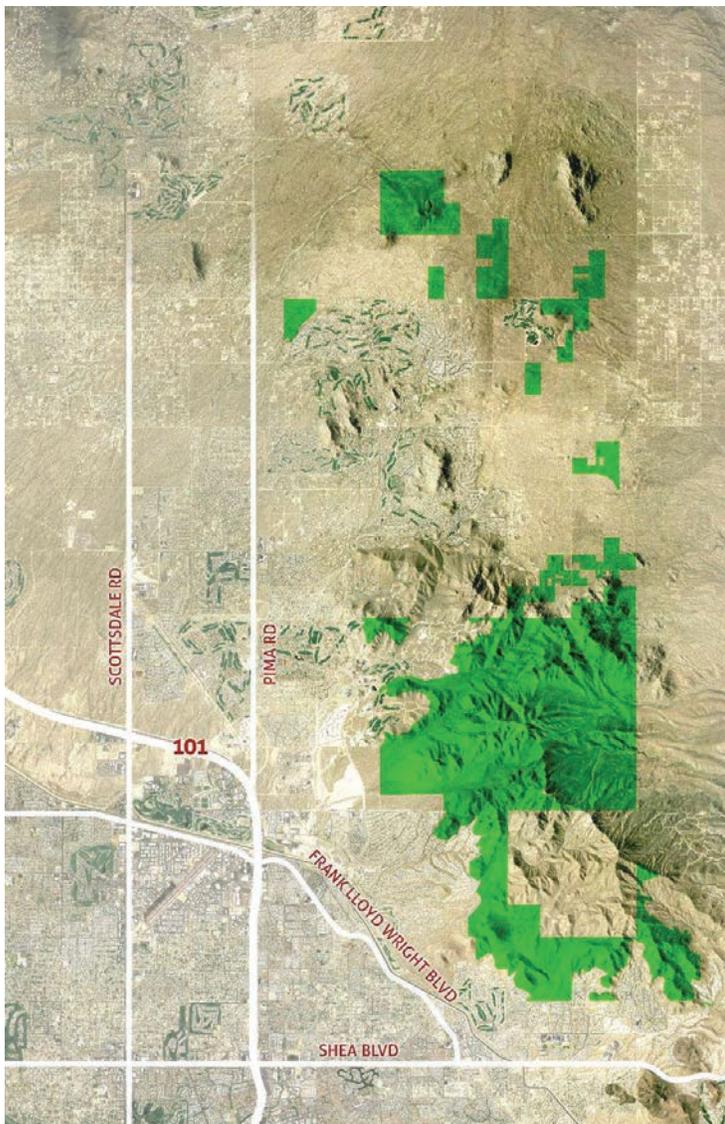
2004

More Land Acquired

The Scottsdale City Council approved a master plan in February for a 300-mile citywide system of interconnected recreational trails. With thousands of people visiting the Preserve, the need for more planned access points was obvious.

After breaking ground April 20, Land Trust stewards and volunteers helped the City of Scottsdale's contracted professional trail builder Dennis Smith of NWWIS Inc. construct the new Sunrise Trail at 145th Street north of Via Linda. The new trail would connect Lost Dog and Ringtail trails.

Preserve Land Acquisitions Through 2004



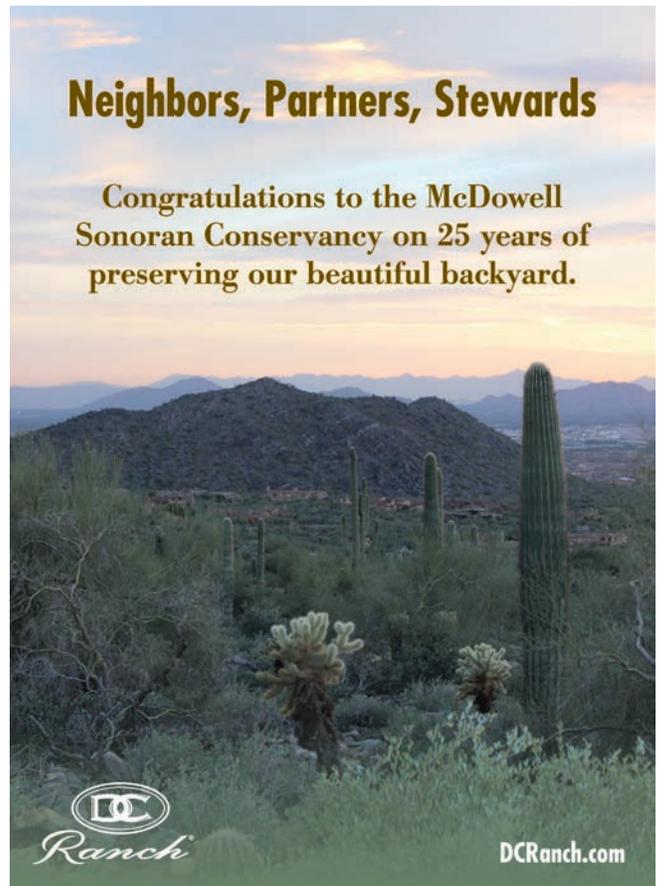
There was more to celebrate on October 3. All of the private land within the study boundary had been purchased, and 13,826 acres had been permanently preserved. Another 16,100 acres were conditionally protected under the Arizona Preserve Initiative. Nearly all of the private land had been acquired amicably with fair compensation.

In just a few short years of trail building, hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians and people attending educational presentations grew dramatically. It was clear that the Preserve had become Scottsdale's point of pride.

During 2004, the one hundred Land Trust stewards had volunteered 7,253 hours. Stewards were now charged with helping to build trailheads and more trails for public use. 🐦

Neighbors, Partners, Stewards

**Congratulations to the McDowell
Sonoran Conservancy on 25 years of
preserving our beautiful backyard.**

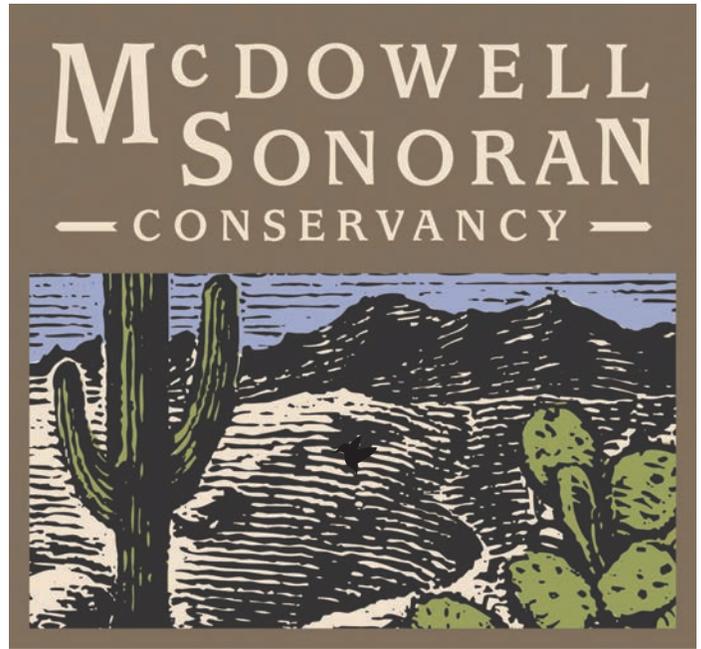


The Land Trust Changes Its Name

On August 15, the board of the McDowell Sonoran Land Trust voted to officially change the name of the organization to the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy to better reflect the Land Trust's volunteer stewardship in the Preserve and its partnership with the citizens and City of Scottsdale. Program work by stewards in partnership with the City owned Preserve continued to grow.

The Conservancy approved a new logo after adopting its new name. Along with the change in the Conservancy name, the Conservancy moved to a new office in the Scottsdale Promenade on the northeast corner of Scottsdale Road and Frank Lloyd Wright Boulevard.

As increased community use of the Preserve continued, the Conservancy created a new program, the pathfinder program. The program began to train volunteers to staff Preserve trailheads as part of the Conservancy's commitment to protect the Preserve. The newly trained pathfinders became welcoming ambassadors for Preserve visitors.



Changes in city government also brought changes to the Preserve. The city brought fire protection in-house in July. It created the first Scottsdale Fire Department after a long history of contracting for fire services. The city and the fire department now assumed responsibility for fielding a wildland fire division and protecting the Preserve. 🐦



"SCENIC BEAUTY"

*Hiking-Biking-or Viewing the Preserve makes
Scottsdale a Special Place...
Congratulations on 25 Years.*

The Nagins

The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy wishes to express sincere gratitude to the donors, steward, volunteers, community and City of Scottsdale for the continued support over the past 25 years.



2006

Mountain Bike Patrol Launched

Throughout the growth of the Preserve, a growing number of mountain bikers used the McDowell and surrounding Sonoran desert trails to ride in the desert. The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy recognized that the only way to ensure the safe and proper use of trails would be to create another steward program. Thus, the Conservancy launched a mountain bike steward patrol. B.J. Heggli served as lead steward for the bike patrol. The new bike patrol volunteer stewards wore bright yellow shirts to identify themselves while patrolling large areas of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve as well as nearby State Trust lands in northern Scottsdale.

In May, the Conservancy published *A Field Guide for the McDowell Sonoran Preserve* edited by Frederick C. Klein. It included monographs by historians and Conservancy stewards, and comprehensive, foldout trail maps.

After years of anonymity and conversational nicknames in the Preserve, key features in the McDowells were officially given names. Don Meserve of the City's preservation division coordinated the effort. The Arizona State Board of Geography and Historic Names approved three naming features in the southern McDowell Mountains: Taliesin Overlook, Taliesin Wash, and Lost Dog Wash. 🐕

As more mountain bikers began using trails new Mountain Bike Patrol stewards began patrolling trails.



2007

Steward Volunteers Grow to 300



2007 Steward class represents the total stewards now more than 300 to address the increased use of Conservancy trails.

Participants in the 2007 Arizona Town Hall considered the topic of “Land Use: Challenges and Choices for the 21st Century”. The diverse group of attendees, including attendees from the Conservancy, came to the conclusion that state trust land reform should be enacted. Further there was support to provide adequate funding to the State Land Department to become a true asset manager.

With an increased consciousness of the need to protect and preserve land, the Conservancy reached a new level.

The efforts to educate the local community about the Conservancy’s dedication to steward the McDowell Mountains and surrounding Sonoran Desert resulted in the Conservancy’s steward strength reaching 300 volunteers. 🐦

2008

Breaking Ground at Gateway to the Preserve

On June 7, stewards and the community celebrated the long awaited opening of the Gateway to the McDowell Sonoran Preserve with a groundbreaking ceremony. Located off of Thompson Peak Parkway in the DC Ranch area, Gateway would become the most visited access to the Preserve. By October, parking was available as a prelude to a May 2009 grand opening of the trailhead.

For some time, Conservancy volunteers considered how to engage more families and children to learn about the McDowell Mountains and Sonoran Desert. A program

began to emerge that would soon attract hundreds. Officially launched in October, the “Family Fridays” series of programs featured experts talking about the Preserve’s flora and fauna. “Family Fridays” attracted parents and children throughout the community and the audience gained a new appreciation of the environment.

With the formation of an equestrian patrol unit, equestrian stewards joined the hike and bike patrol units to cover all areas of the Preserve. The first group ride took place in December 2008. 🐾

Conservancy Stewards and community meet for the ground breaking of the Gateway Trailhead.



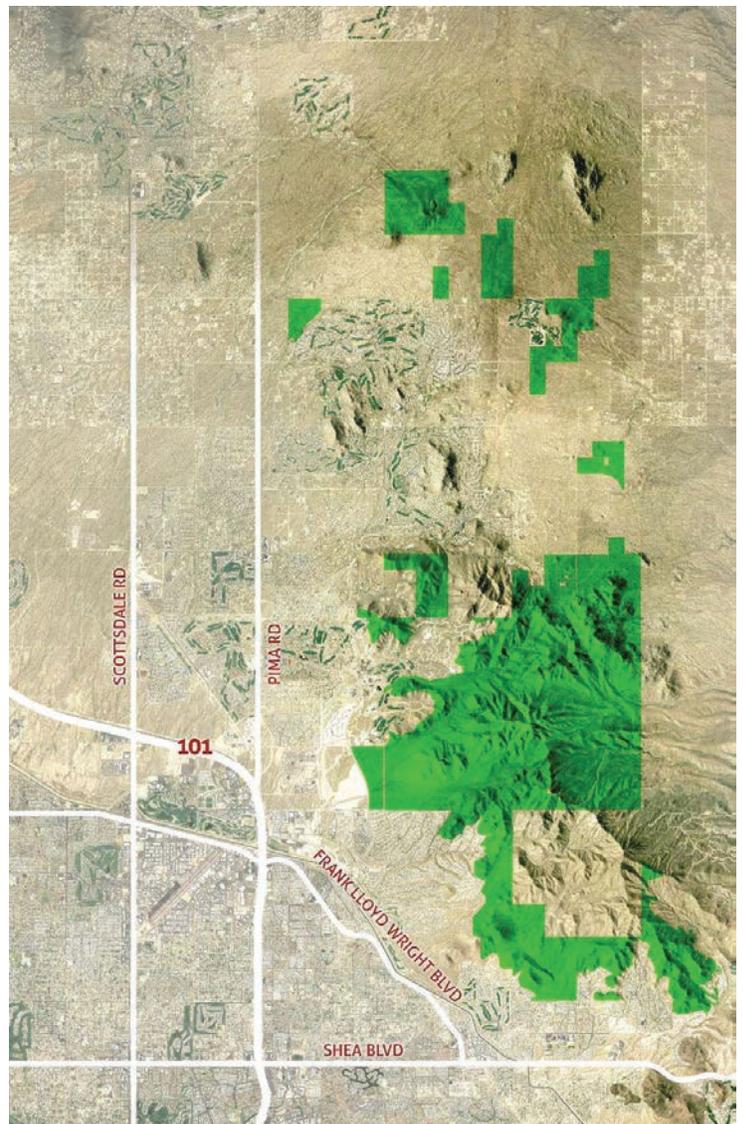
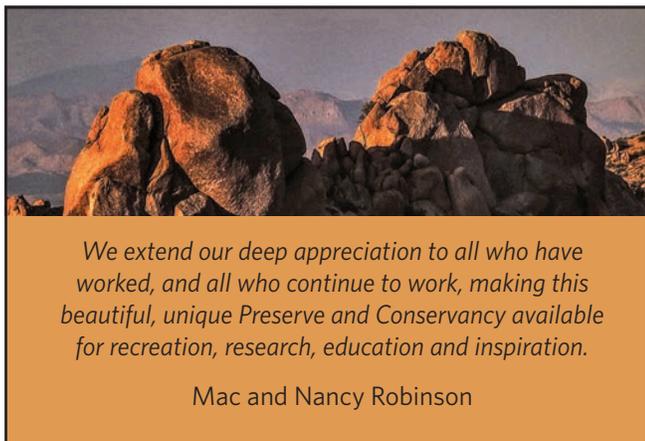
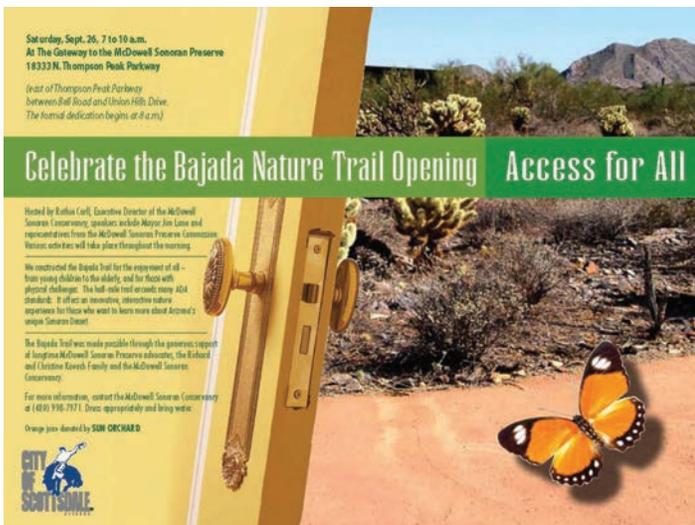
Bajada Nature Trail Opens

On May 2, the community gathered to celebrate the long awaited opening of the Gateway to the Preserve. Soon to follow, on Sept. 26, the Bajada Nature Trail opened at the Gateway. The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy donated, designed and created the Bajada Nature Trail as a barrier-free nature trail

The Bajada Nature Trail made access to the Preserve easy for those with mobility challenges or seeking an easy stroll into the Preserve. The new nature trail was made possible through the generous support of long-time McDowell Sonoran Preserve advocates, the Richard and Christine Kovach Family, and the Conservancy.

As the year came to an end, and after years of an informal partnership with the City, the Conservancy signed a formal Memorandum of Understanding in December. The new relationship formally outlined the volunteer staffing responsibilities of the Conservancy with regard to the city-owned Preserve. This was clearly a new relationship giving the Conservancy an official status on the Preserve. The new agreement also outlined clear-cut roles that would bring greater stability for the Conservancy and Scottsdale in return would save hundreds of thousands of dollars a year in potential labor and services. 🦋

Preserve Land Acquisitions Through 2009.



Launching the Field Institute

As the City of Scottsdale continued to acquire land for the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, a group of forward thinking individuals recognized that very little was known about the acquired land. In 2010, the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy received grants from an anonymous donor and the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust to conduct a three-year survey of the flora and fauna of the Preserve.

The grants launched the Field Institute and enabled it to organize and conduct scientific research programs to uncover facts about the flora, fauna, geology, and human history of Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve. The scientists and experts who led the flora and fauna research worked with trained volunteer citizen scientists to document the populations of plants and animals inhabiting the Preserve, and began to monitor those populations over time. The



Conservancy Field Institute volunteers gathering data in the Preserve to increase knowledge base.



*"Congratulations on 25 years:
without the Conservancy,
I'd have to go back to work!"*

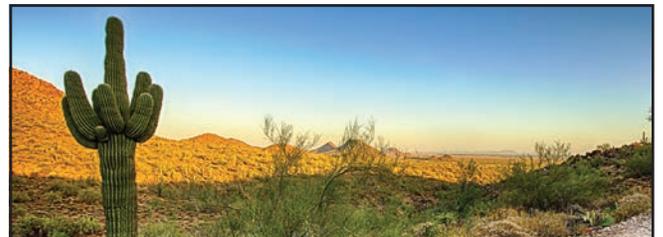
Elliott Gartner

studies established the Field Institute as the research center of the Conservancy.

The results of one Field Institute study, led by Research Geologist Brian Gootee of the Arizona Geological Survey, focused on the mineralogy and geologic history of the Lost Dog overlook area. A research paper on the findings, written by Gootee and Field Institute citizen scientists, was peer-reviewed and published by the Arizona Geological Survey. 🐦



"Congratulations on 25 Years of Service"
Rick and Judy Cooper



*Congratulations to the Conservancy
for 25 Years of Service stewarding
Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve.*
Tom and Judy Headley

Preserve Treasure Trove

Mike Nolan took over the reins as executive director of the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy in January 2011. As the organization celebrated its 20th anniversary since incorporation, the Preserve had reached 18,000 acres. Now one of the largest urban preserves in the nation, abundant with wildlife and countless varieties of Sonoran Desert plants, it was a research treasure trove.

Nolan's support for scientific study invigorated citizen scientists and the McDowell Sonoran Field Institute. The Field Institute stepped up its work on the flora and fauna surveys.

Scientific partners led each study with volunteers from the Conservancy and other organizations. They worked hundreds of volunteer hours collecting data.

In September, there was a change in the size of the many of the commissions advising the Scottsdale City Council. The Preserve Commission overseeing the Preserve, on which many Conservancy supporters served, was reduced from eleven members to seven members, but the reduction did not affect the Conservancy's mission. 🐦

Scientific partners lead the effort with Conservancy volunteers to expand work on flora and fauna survey.



Tom's Thumb Trailhead Opens



Tom Kreuser proudly displays his thumb (second from left) with Mayor Jim Lane, (second from right) along with other dignitaries to celebrate the opening of Tom's Thumb Trailhead.

January started with Walter Thurber, the principal investigator of birdlife for the McDowell Sonoran Field Institute, leading the first bird survey in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. After this first survey, Thurber trained McDowell Sonoran Conservancy stewards to continue with birdlife surveys. The trained stewards conducted follow-on surveys visiting the same six sites in the Preserve several times a year to identify species, migration patterns and other activity.

The Tom's Thumb Trailhead opened on October 18, giving access to the northern reaches of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, including the Marcus Landslide Interpretive Trail. A month later the city acquired 6,400 acres in the northern part of the Preserve. The new acquisition provided a long hoped for

connection to the Tonto Forest and included Cholla and Granite mountains. The new land had extensive areas of exposed bedrock, boulder outcrops, and lush upper Sonoran Desert full of vegetation supporting a habitat for wildlife.

2012 also saw the launch of the Sonoran Desert Women as an affiliate of the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy. The women's membership group organized under the leadership of Leslie Dashew. The group stated their purpose as follows. "Through engagement of women leaders in the community, we seek to raise awareness and support for the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy mission by sharing the history of the McDowell Mountains and Sonoran Desert in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, promoting visitation, education and preservation." 🦋

2013

New Trailheads Open in the Preserve

Brown's Ranch Trailhead quietly opened on June 10. The new trailhead, located at 30301 N. Alma School Parkway, had its official public dedication on Saturday, October 19. The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy and the City of Scottsdale hosted the dedication. The trailhead features displays depicting the area's rich history and amenities including: a 200-space parking area, 24 horse trailing parking spots, restrooms, water fountains, administrative building, a shaded amphitheater, and trails for hikers, mountain bikers and equestrians.

The Conservancy and the City of Scottsdale opened the Granite Mountain Trailhead at 31402 N. 136th St, two miles

north of Rio Verde Drive, in July. It included parking and a map display of trails. However, it did not include water for hikers and other users.

With the expansion of the Preserve, its trailheads and trail system, the Conservancy also expanded its steward program. During 2013, the Conservancy trained 133 new stewards, bringing the total to over 500 active stewards. They dedicated nearly 40,000 hours to patrolling and maintaining trails, welcoming visitors and educating the community through hikes, outreach programs, school tours, and other events and programs. 🐦

Lynne Russel (left) and Paul Staker (right) hold the ribbon to be cut by Jane Rau and Mayor Jim Lane to open the Brown's Ranch Trailhead.

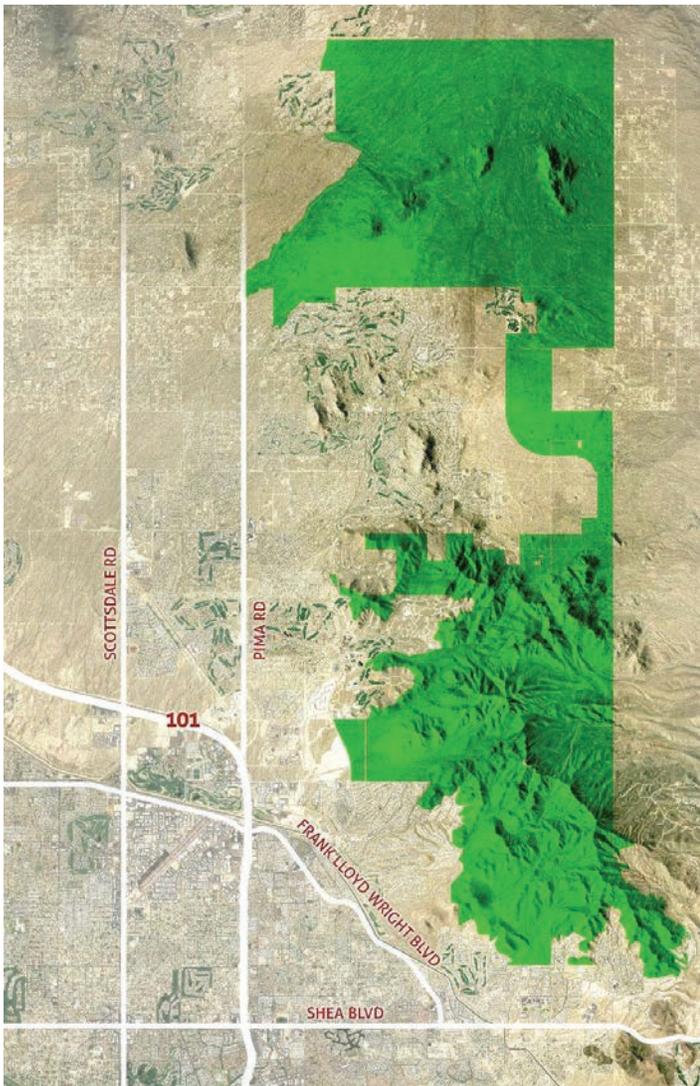


Conservancy and Pioneer Recognized

On Saturday, March 22, the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy and the City of Scottsdale held a public celebration to dedicate the Jane Rau Interpretive Trail at the Brown's Ranch Trailhead of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. Mayor Jim Lane spoke about Jane's persistence to preserve the land for this and future generations and Conservancy Executive Director Mike Nolan spoke about Jane's unending energy and passion for the Sonoran Desert. The trail was the second barrier-free Preserve trail designed for those with mobility challenges.

Jane Rau, one of the original founders of the McDowell Sonoran Land Trust and longtime steward, spoke to the hundreds attending. After cutting the ceremonial ribbon to launch the

Preserve Land Acquisitions Through 2014



new trail, the ninety-one-year-old led those who were able on a hike along her trail.

2014 marked a pivotal point for the Field Institute when the Conservancy published the *Flora and Fauna of Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve* with the results of the Field Institute's three-year baseline ecological study. It presented the detailed work conducted over several years by the Field Institute, and documents the flora and fauna of the Preserve. The study provides the baseline information that will be used for conservation and management for years to come, and reinforces the partnership between the Conservancy and the City of Scottsdale. The Conservancy uses the data gathered to assist the City in its management of the Preserve, and shares the data with scientists seeking information about a variety of natural resources.

In 2014, the Conservancy also won the Crescordia Award. This prestigious award recognizes exceptional work in environmental education and communication. The award specifically cited the McDowell Sonoran Field Institute and its citizen-scientist efforts. 🐦

Ride on, MSC!

The Tour de Scottsdale is a proud partner of the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy since 2004, raising more than \$180,000 to support education and conservation efforts in the Preserve.

DC Ranch

TourdeScottsdale.net

Stewardship and Research Expand

The Conservancy recognized the need for additional stewards to support the growing interest in the Preserve. In response to the growing acreage of the Preserve, the Conservancy expanded its steward cadre to nearly 600 Stewards. By the end of 2015, the Conservancy conducted its 55th New Steward Orientation class. The curriculum now included one eight-hour orientation and 12 hours of continuing education classes throughout the year. The Steward Education program held seven orientations that year.

In 2015, Stewards recorded an amazing total of 56,215.80 hours of dedicated service in 11 programs valued at nearly \$1.3 million.

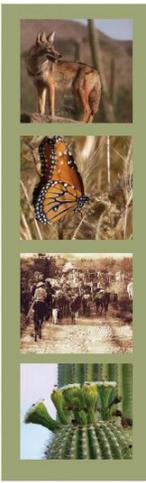
In 2015, the Conservancy Field Institute completed the *Ecological Resource Plan*. This plan articulates the long-term vision for the Preserve and plots a course to get there. The Field Institute also had its fourth peer-reviewed paper published. The paper describes the findings of its reptile and amphibian study.

In October, the Field Institute held its first research symposium at Scottsdale Community College in partnership with the Center for Native and Urban Wildlife (CNUW). The purpose of the symposium was to bring together researchers, students, citizens, and community leaders to share and learn about the research conducted within the Preserve. It featured speakers, poster presentations, tours of CNUW facilities, workshops, and guided hikes in the Preserve. Topics included research conducted on flora, fauna, geology, and human history of the Preserve, and a discussion about the future of conservation in the Phoenix area. The panel consisted of representatives from the City of Scottsdale, the City of Phoenix, the Sonoran Institute, and Maricopa County Parks. Keynote speakers were Virginia Korte, CNUW's first director and a current Scottsdale city council member, and Dr. Sharon

McDowell Sonoran Preserve Research Symposium Planned for October 24-25

Please join us for the the first-ever
McDowell Sonoran Preserve Research Symposium





This two-day event brings together researchers, students, citizens, and community leaders to share and learn about the scientific and historical research conducted within Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve and the surrounding area. This event is hosted by the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy's Field Institute and Scottsdale Community College's Center for Native and Urban Wildlife.

Purpose:

- Promote awareness of the research being undertaken on the Preserve and Sonoran Desert.
- Encourage networking among scientists, students, and the public
- Trigger new research and collaborations that benefit the Preserve and surrounding parks, preserves, and natural areas.

When:

- October 24, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm
- Presentations
- Posters
- Biodiversity tours
- October 25, 8:30 am - 12:00 p.m.
- Educational hikes to research sites in the Preserve
- Workshops and tours at Scottsdale Community College

Where:

Scottsdale Community College, 9000 E Chaparral Rd, Scottsdale, AZ 85256 in the Science Lecture Building.

Registration

Registration for the symposium is \$20, which includes a Saturday continental breakfast, morning and afternoon refreshments (coffee & tea), and Sunday activities. A student rate of \$10 is offered to undergraduate and graduate students. To register, go to www.mcdowellsonoran.org and find link under "Latest News". For more information, to submit an abstract, or to inquire about scholarships, contact mspresearch@mcdowellsonoran.org.







Hall, associate professor and senior sustainability scientist at Arizona State University.

Attendees included over 60 stewards, professors and students from ASU and Scottsdale Community College, representatives from non-profits such as the Desert Botanical Garden, and members of the Scottsdale City Council. The symposium resulted in new partnerships and research ideas that will directly benefit the Preserve and the Phoenix area. 

The next 25 years

The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy has evolved from a grass-roots advocacy effort to an effective and respected science-based, land stewardship organization. Our two key priorities, applied ecological research and hands-on Preserve stewardship, allow us to effectively take care of the Preserve, educate citizens, and enhance safe access to the trails.

In the short term, perhaps the next two to four years, we must continue to expand our steward numbers as the trail miles grow beyond 200, a possible new major trailhead is built near the intersection of Pima and Dynamite Roads, and we seek a broader presence on patrol across the Preserve landscape – among all our other growing activities!

Over a longer time horizon, our work in both stewardship and research has meaningful potential to extend our reach and positively impact the ongoing management of other open space across the region.

As government budgets are strained at all levels, parks and preserves become attractive targets for cost savings. Private nature centers and small land trusts sometimes struggle to manage the property they have come to acquire because they can't afford the needed staff. Volunteer programs modeled on our steward program have the potential to provide sup-

port and assistance to organizations like these, and improve management of urban and suburban parks, preserves, nature centers, and open spaces.

The research conducted by our McDowell Sonoran Conservancy Field Institute on the Preserve, monitoring ecological change, assessing human impacts, and understanding the wildland – urban interface, can directly assist land managers in the desert southwest through what we are learning. The approach that we take to our research, with extensive use of citizen scientists following the design of a highly-qualified principal investigator, has the potential to serve as a model for other work in urban areas across a much broader region.

Other non-profit organizations and government entities have already reached out to the Conservancy for help in these areas. The White Tanks Conservancy in the west valley worked closely with our stewards to model their new organization on our programs. Other nonprofits have also adapted one or more of our steward programs.

No one can predict the future and what preserve stewardship needs will arise, but the Conservancy is well-positioned to lead the way not just in Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve but across the region. I hope you will be a part of it. 🐦

Sonoran Desert vistas accent the beauty, geologic diversity and mountain scenes like no other.



Until Sunrise Comes Again

Nancy A Robinson

When shadows fall deep near Tom's Thumb,
when Brown's Mountain glows gold,
and slowly moving clouds dress in fiery pink,
Lost Dog's trails grow quiet as hikers empty out.
In silence animals regain an ancient birthright, for
the Preserve belongs only to them till sunrise comes again.

Temperatures drop, lavender creeps across the sky,
subtle creosote bush and jojoba fragrances rise,
Cactus Wren chirps while settling in her cholla nest
just before diamondback moves across the path and
disappears behind a fallen saguaro, and packrat dashes
from her midden to begin a nightly treasure hunt.

In the updraft of Granite Mountain, Golden Eagle takes flight;
cougar watches the sunset from boulders below, scanning
for movement, for scent, planning the hunt ahead;
in the distance three coyotes are in a chase, then a
white flash of leaping rabbit, followed by yip, yip, yipping.

A covey of quail calls stragglers from the wash and
settles into a mesquite tree; javelina feed on prickly pear;
desert tortoise tucks into the soft sand of a rocky bank,
and mule deer and her fawn forage on savory grasses.
Further on, forlorn badger meanders, searching for another
pocket gopher den, having lost the last gopher to coyote.

As the moon rises and the sky fades to deep purple,
a flock of bats swoops down the cliff toward saguaros,
where white blossoms call all pollinators. From their cliff nest,
a pair of Peregrine Falcon surveys the scene. The male
takes flight—speed and accuracy make winners in survival.

Great Horned Owl appears with the full moon,
spreads wings, takes silent flight from peaks, through canyons,
casting her shadow to earth, throwing her silhouette to sky,
as she continues to inspire the heart of myth and legend,
hunting in the moonlight of a Sonoran Desert night,
till sunrise comes again.



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Suite 110
Scottsdale, Arizona 85254

Get the latest McDowell Sonoran
Conservancy info at:



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