

Mountain Lines

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State Trust Land Reform Initiative on Target for November Ballot

A citizen's initiative developed by a coalition of conservation, education and business leaders to modernize the management of Arizona's Trust Lands is slated to be on the ballot for the November General Election. The Conserving Arizona's Land and Water Initiative modernizes the management of Arizona Trust Lands in several key respects:

- It designates 570,000 acres of Trust Land for conservation.
- It permits local governments to purchase at fair market value Trust Land for open space.
- Compels that Trust Land planning be done in coordination with local governments.
- Makes funding for the State Land Department self-sufficient – proceeds from land sales will go to education.

"Reforming the management of Arizona's Trust Lands is long overdue," said John Graham, President of the Board of Directors of the Nature Conservancy's Arizona Chapter. "Our land is the natural legacy we leave our children. Yet we manage these resources in the same fashion as we did when Arizona became a state in 1912. In 1912, Arizona had just over 200,000 residents. Today, we have over 6 million fellow Arizonans."

"Every aspect of this initiative benefits the classroom," said John Wright, President of the Arizona Education Association. "Setting aside land for conservation increases the value of the remaining Trust Land, sale proceeds will go directly to the classroom and better land planning will mitigate the impacts on our schools resulting from growth."

When Arizona became a state, Congress provided 11 million acres to be held in Trust to benefit public schools and other public purposes. Currently, the minimum value of Trust Land is determined by its "highest and best use," which in most cases is housing and commercial real estate development.

This initiative differs from a similar measure that was narrowly defeated in 2006. It is more tightly focused and does not affect existing or future grazing leases. Additionally, the current initiative allows for right-of-way for critical infrastructure and approximately 8.5 million acres remain open consistent with existing trust requirements. ■



How will this initiative affect the McDowell Sonoran Preserve?

The initiative designates 5,177 acres of land within the voter approved boundary for the McDowell Sonoran Preserve as Permanent Conservation Lands allowing them to be sold without public auction to the City of Scottsdale for use in a manner consistent with the conservation of the natural, cultural and historical assets of the land, and restricting them from development.

What other land is designated as permanent conservation land in the initiative?

570,000 acres statewide are designated as permanent conservation land, including treasured areas such as the Superstitions, the Verde Headwaters, Cienega Creek, Continental Mountain, Daisy Mountain, and Picacho Peak.

Where can I read the initiative?

A link to a downloadable version of the initiative is located on MSC's website on the 'Conservation' page.



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McDowell Sonoran Conservancy

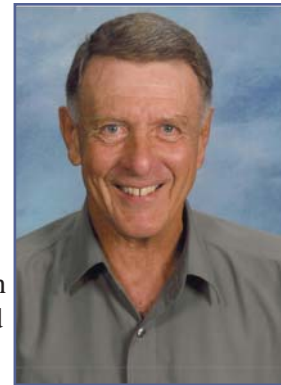
The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy's commitment to the community is to champion the preservation of the Sonoran Desert, facilitate the community's relationship with preserved land, and develop a sense of stewardship within the community. It is our goal to secure for future generations their unique environmental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

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

Director's Column *from the* Chairman of the Board —

By Con Englehorn

First, we owe Len Marcisz three cheers for his yeoman's job as chairman of the board last year. Some of the MSC accomplishments during his tour of duty include: the addition of 132 new stewards; a new staff member Linda Raish, community development director; 4 new board members; a dynamic new web site; a new system for reporting patrolling activity for use by both MSC and the City of Scottsdale; growing the education offerings with new programs, such as the Summer Lecture Series; the addition of a land donation valued at \$1,600,000; and the official dedication of the Gateway!



This year your board of directors plans to build on this legacy by continuing to expand our outreach to the citizens of Scottsdale, the "owners" of the Preserve, through education and service. As public awareness of the Preserve increases we will need to continue the growth of the steward program in order to respond to the expanding use of the Preserve and, at the same time, protect it for future generations of users.

The Gateway, with the parking lot opening in October, 2008, and the grand opening in April, 2009, is going to require many hours of hard work by our stewards and other volunteers. Upon its completion, the Pathfinders will need to be prepared for a significant increase in new visitors. Also, the new trails in the Rock Knob area in the north end of the McDowells will require construction and maintenance, steward patrolling, and Pathfinders.

Last, but not least, a State Land Reform bill will be on the ballot this fall. It is critical for MSC to participate in the advocacy and support role for this legislation. This could very well be the last opportunity for land reform to be decided, so if you can provide volunteer or financial support please do so. Above all, be sure to vote. ■

A community is like a ship; everyone ought to be prepared to take the helm.
- Henrik Ibsen

MSC Welcomes Three New Board Members

Cay Cowie

Cay Cowie founded Synergy Seven in 2002 which, since its founding, has been in the top five businesses in *Ranking Arizona*, *The Best of Arizona Business* and is currently in the top twenty five for *Woman Owned Business*, *Management Consultants and Permanent Placement Companies* published by The Business Journal. She is an active participant in many community volunteer organizations and is currently on the board for Liberty Wildlife and Desert Auxiliary Foundation and is a member of Women & Philanthropy.



Hon Kachina Honors Jane Rau

Every year since 1976, deserving volunteers receive the prestigious Hon Kachina Volunteer Award for their outstanding work in improving the lives of others in our community. The Hon Kachina Volunteer Awards are sponsored by the Hon Kachina Council, a volunteer organization of business and professional men and women. Honorees are selected by the Hon Kachina Council and a volunteer Board of Governors from nominations submitted from all parts of Arizona.

This year they have selected MSC co-founder and Master Steward Jane Rau as one of 9 honorees, for her commitment to giving back to the community. Jane will receive her award at a Black-tie Gala dinner at the Camelback Inn on Saturday, September 27.

As part of the nomination process, MSC Stewards and Scottsdale Mayor Mary Manross wrote letters of support for Jane. Their sentiments reflect what anyone who has met Jane also believes. For instance, Mayor Manross wrote “The City of Scottsdale’s McDowell Sonoran Preserve would not be a reality today if not for Jane’s efforts dating back to the early 1980’s. Through Jane’s extraordinary grassroots effort and passion for preservation, she began a dialogue that served as a foundation for what is today an amazing community asset which will benefit generations to come.”

Through Jane’s activism and unending enthusiasm for the conservation of Arizona’s open space, thousands of acres of urban land will not be developed. This not only impacts all citizens of Arizona now, but will impact generations of Arizona citizens in perpetuity. Her foresight and unwavering determination has helped to create a living treasure to be enjoyed by young and old alike.



While no one person can be credited with what is now the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, Jane has been called “the burr under Scottsdale’s saddle” for her work in advocating for conservation. She has successfully influenced public officials, community opinion and the private sector to help establish this regional open space system for the preservation of flora, fauna, archaeological and historical resources, with appropriate public access.

She pulled people together and spoke in a language that everyone could understand. She created consensus in the most difficult circumstances and created partnerships where none had existed before. She has worked tirelessly for 40 years to maintain the Arizona she fell in love with when she settled north of Dynamite Road in 1967. ■

Congratulations Hon Kachina Volunteer Award honoree and MSC Master Steward Jane Rau!
Your extraordinary gifts of time and energy have improved the quality of life for all Arizona residents.

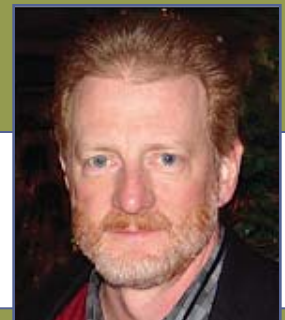


Virginia Korte

Virginia Korte is President Emeritus of the Scottsdale Area Chamber of Commerce. She was a Scottsdale car dealership owner and served as chamber chairman before taking over as CEO in November 2002. A long-time advocate for open space, Virginia has served on the McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission and was the chairman of the McDowell Mountains Task Force.

Dan Dixon

Dan Dixon is a Senior Vice President and manager of the Enterprise Architecture (EA) organization for Wells Fargo & Company’s Technology Information Group. He is a long-time supporter of preservation of the open desert. He will bring his business acumen and passion for the outdoors together to help MSC achieve our goals.

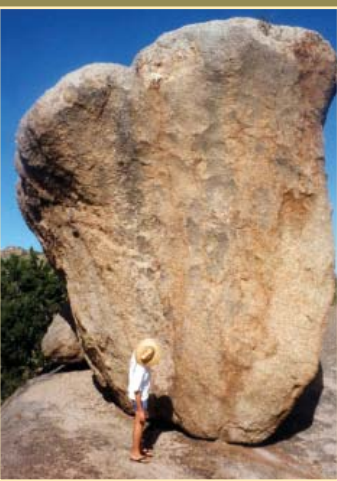


Feature Article *A Historical Perspective: 1990 to 1993*

Excerpt from *Desert Spring: Learning to Love and Preserve Wild Arizona* (publication pending)

Written by Pete Chasar, MSC's first Chairman of the Board

To place some protections on the McDowells, as well as desert washes and other sensitive land, Scottsdale developed the Environmentally Sensitive Land Ordinance (ESLO), which it adopted in 1991. Unlike the hillside ordinance, it didn't totally prevent development high in the McDowells, but instead reduced the number of units that could be built on hillside land. In other words, under ESLO, the Marleys, Corrigan, Herbergers, and others were free to develop all over their land in the mountains. They just couldn't build as many homes, hotels or other structures on steep slopes as on their flatter land.



Greg Woodall, one of the early forces behind the Preserve's establishment, can easily be identified in historic photos as he routinely hiked in flip flops.

As part of their court settlement with the City, the Marley/Corrigan family received zoning for their land in and around the McDowells, 8,300 acres that included many of the unique areas and features that I and others had grown to love and appreciate. The zoning gave the owners the right to build more than eight thousand residential housing units, but included a provision that eight hundred acres of land (some of the highest peaks and ridgelines) remain undeveloped. All the rest could be developed, including some of the mountainsides visible from the rest of Scottsdale, as well as from north Phoenix and Fountain Hills.

With development of most land in the McDowells suddenly a certainty, Scottsdale city leaders began to look for other ways to preserve the mountains. The mayor at that time was the late Herb Drinkwater. Often seen in a Stetson and boots, the mayor was passionate about saving the McDowells from development, yet at the same time owned investment

land in the western foothills along with Dick Campana, an attorney, developer and ex-husband of the city's next mayor, Kathryn "Sam" Campana. Also, Herb, as Drinkwater liked to be called, built his new home on another parcel in the McDowell foothills. Still, in 1990, Scottsdale, with Herb Drinkwater as mayor, began exploring and promoting various approaches to accomplish what city ordinances could not: preservation of Scottsdale's prominent and beloved McDowells...

...In the summer of 1990, Scottsdale officials pushed for still another preservation approach that they wanted desperately to succeed. Dudley Onderdonk called, saying in his semi-stammering voice, "Several of us are—getting together at—Mustang Library to discuss the—formation of a land trust—and we'd like you to join us." Land trusts and conservancies are private non-profit groups involved in land preservation. They mostly raise funds from private sources, then use those funds to purchase land or its development rights. How could I refuse Dudley's invitation? I was already in love with those McDowells.

Kristen Jaskie (right), a young lady who was a role model for her peers and one of the early members of MSC's board of directors, receives a plaque in honor of her 4 years of service between 1993 and 1997.



Myrna Smith (left), an early steward and flora expert, was known for hikes where she shared her love and knowledge of desert flora. On her passing, she donated her library to MSC. She is greatly missed!

The meeting was the first of several held that summer and fall. At the time Mustang Library was a brand-new building that still had the distinct smell of fresh paint and new carpet. We met in a

This insightful piece of history is a reminder to all of us who are involved in the preservation of our uniquely beautiful desert and mountains that our humble efforts stand on the shoulders of thousands of people who have devoted countless hours to a variety of causes to protect this land. The excerpt also sheds light on the hard work, cooperation, and often unrecognized support of city officials and staff that have contributed so much to past and present preservation opportunities.

Les Conklin, MSC Board Member; President, Greater Pinnacle Peak Association/Friends of the Scenic Drive; Editor, *A Peek at The Peak* magazine.

The excerpt reminds me of a time long ago when my neighbor, Jane Rau, told me about meetings that were being held with residents and city planners to discuss ways to save the McDowells. Jane said that the group needed funds to form a land trust and that she and Leonard, her late husband, were considering donating a substantial amount of their own money to make it happen. They acted and "it" happened, and an essential step in the development of today's McDowell Sonoran Conservancy was taken.

little conference room just off the lobby. Those early meetings were attended by 8 to 10 people beside Dudley and myself, but those I still remember clearly are: Jane Rau, a long-time activist who lived in the north Scottsdale desert, homespun and effervescent, and usually wearing jeans, her gray hair in pigtails; Marilyn Pauwels, a straitlaced professional lobbyist and fundraiser who worked with the Nature Conservancy; Karen Bertiger, a loquacious real-estate agent and financial advisor; Fred Davidson, an attorney who had recently moved from New Jersey; Tom Matthews, a young, soft-spoken member of the Arizona Mountaineering Club; and Sue Adams, a sometimes flamboyant Scottsdale marketing/communications specialist.



In 1993, Chet Andrews, a former chairman and the first Steward, sets off into the Preserve with Jane Rau, one of MSC's founders.

When I consider how little experience any of us had in organizing a land trust, I wonder how the effort ever got off the ground. Those early meetings included lots of rambling monologues by some in the group. Sometimes those speeches provided valuable information. Sometimes they were long, drawn-out bits of chatter that produced yawns and squirming in the rest of us. I also left nearly every meeting lugging a thick stack of news clippings, memos, reports, letters, hand-book excerpts—anything and everything ever written about forming a land trust or preserving open space. I suppose this is typical for a fledgling group trying to navigate through uncharted territory.

To get the land trust up and running, several things had to be accomplished almost simultaneously. We needed a name, a set of by-laws, a list of potential board members and some operating funds. The name choice proved a bit divisive, in that some of us liked the simplicity of McDowell Land Trust, while others felt strongly about McDowell Sonoran Land Trust to indicate that the trust was also concerned about desert preservation. McDowell Sonoran Land Trust won. But this ended up being the group's DBA name only. According to state law, the group had to be incorporated as McDowell Sonoran Land Conservancy. (In 2005, the conservancy's DBA name was changed to McDowell Sonoran Conservancy.)

Steering committee member and attorney Fred Davidson offered to write our by-laws and to handle the incorporation and the 501(c)(3) filing with the IRS, all for a very nominal flat fee. We all agreed that Fred was the best choice for the job. Marilyn Pauwels, who had been active in environmental work and fundraising, made several suggestions for board members, including Rory Aikens, a public information specialist with the Arizona Game and Fish Department, and Mark Knops, a state attorney.

Members of the steering committee each initially made a small donation just so we'd have enough money to open a checking account. But the real money came in thanks to Jane Rau. Despite the fact that we were not yet incorporated and without the 501(c)(3) status that makes contributions tax-deductible, Jane got generous donations from several local benefactors. Karen Bertiger was chosen to watch over the funds as the group's treasurer. And the group nominated me as chairman. ■

MSC History Highlights

- 1991 ■ MSC incorporates as a non-profit 501(c)(3).
- 1992 ■ MSC asks the Scottsdale City Council to create a McDowell Mountain and Sonoran Desert preservation plan. The Council then forms the McDowell Mountains Task Force (MMTF) which includes key MSC members.
- 1993 ■ The "Mountain Lines" makes its debut.
 - Free hikes to areas identified for inclusion in the Preserve initiate what becomes a highly successful hike program.
 - Upon MMTF recommendations, Scottsdale establishes the McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission and appoints 5 MSC Board members to the 9-person Commission.
 - A study conducted to determine the location of the future Preserve produces a "Recommended Study Boundary" (RSB), a 25.7 square mile McDowell Sonoran Preserve.
- 1994 ■ Scottsdale dedicates 3 parcels of land totaling 5 sq. miles to establish the initial McDowell Sonoran Preserve.
- 1995 ■ Voters approve a .2% sales tax increase for preservation.
- 1996 ■ October is officially declared *McDowell Sonoran Month*.
- 1997 ■ MSC hires its first Executive Director, Sandy Bahr.
- 1998 ■ The McDowell Sonoran Preserve plan is expanded to encompass 57 square miles (36,400 acres).
 - With Scottsdale Community College, MSC begins the "Steward" program to train volunteers to be caretakers of the Preserve.
- 1999 ■ Carla (full legal name) becomes MSC's second Executive Director.
 - Key Preserve purchases are made in the southern Lost Dog Wash access area.
 - The City purchases the historic Brown's Ranch.
- 2000 ■ In partnership with the City, MSC purchases 31 acres of land outside of the RSB and donates it to the Preserve.
- 2001 ■ On February 15th the Arizona State Land Department holds a hearing to determine if 16,600 acres of State Trust Land in northern Scottsdale should be reclassified as "suitable for conservation" under the Arizona Preserve Initiative (API) . MSC takes the lead in organizing a turnout of over 1,500 people – a record-shattering attendance for an API hearing.
- 2004 ■ Scottsdale voters approve an additional .15% sales tax increase for land acquisition and access area amenities.
- 2005 ■ Construction begins on the Lost Dog Wash Trailhead
- 2006 ■ Thanks to the generosity of the Pederson Group Inc., MSC opens its first office.
- 2007 ■ Ruthie Carl becomes MSC's third Executive Director.
 - MSC volunteers give 18,158 hours of time to the Preserve, a 59% increase from the previous year.
 - A donation of a 10.02 acre parcel of land by a long-time MSC donor expands the Preserve boundary by 5 acres.

Gateway Access Area Construction Underway

By Bob Cafarella, Preservation Director, City of Scottsdale

The Mayor officially kicked off construction of the Gateway public access area with a turn of the shovel June 7. The Gateway is the location where everyone - regardless of ability - will be able to enjoy the Sonoran Desert in a natural setting. It will be the largest access area containing a significant range of amenities to accommodate Preserve visitors. It will be the access point for the Central Trails system.

What amenities will be at the Gateway?

The Gateway design includes parking for 500 vehicles. A separate staging area for equestrians and for mountain bike enthusiasts will be created with associated parking for horse trailers. The Gateway will also contain multi-use trails, including an accessible interpretative trail, connecting to the existing Preserve trail system, restrooms, a small office and a work shop / storage building for city staff and volunteers, shade ramadas and seating walls, directional signage, a 50 seat amphitheater, drinking fountains for humans and for dogs, and a water trough for horses.

When will the Gateway open?

The contractor committed to completing a temporary parking area that will open by mid-October providing access to the multi-use trail system. The Gateway is scheduled to open officially in April 2009. MSC Pathfinders will be on hand to assist and to provide information to users once the temporary parking is open.

In anticipation of the construction project city staff and MSC volunteers along with scouts and corporate groups cleared vegetation from areas of the site that will be disturbed by construction. The salvaged vegetation was replanted in safe zones adjacent to the construction zone and in other areas in the Preserve.

In the mean time... There is much work that needs to be accomplished in tandem with the construction of the Gateway access area. Along with connecting trails that need to be built, city staff and MSC have identified nearly 7 miles of old jeep roads that need to be reclaimed and re-vegetated. A series of projects are scheduled during the fall and winter months to accomplish this. Please call the MSC office or the city Preservation office to sign up for a work project. ■

The Gateway will be located north and east of the Thompson Peak Parkway and Bell Road intersection.



The Gateway building will be LEED certified

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System™ is a third-party certification program and the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high performance green buildings. LEED guidelines encourage and accelerate global adoption of sustainable green building and development practices through the creation and implementation of universally understood and accepted tools and performance criteria.

A number of environmentally sustainable technologies will be employed when building the Gateway including rammed earth as the primary building material, solar panels for power, rainwater harvesting to assist in watering plants, stabilized granite for parking areas and accessible trails, and much more.

During some parts of the year, the building is expected to generate enough energy to actually return energy into Scottsdale's energy grid rather than draw from it.

Renderings by WEDDLEGILMORE architects



On The Trails *Fall Hikes*

It's time to get out your hiking boots and hit the trail! October, November, and December bring new hikes and the return of a few favorites. Join our stewards and get into your Preserve. For directions to the meeting places and hike descriptions visit www.mcdowell-sonoran.org or call 480-998-7971, ext. 100 to have a hike brochure mailed to you.

October through December Public Hike Schedule

- 10/4 Desert Ecology on the Quartz Trail
- 10/5 The Human McDowells (I) on the Lost Dog Wash Trail
- 10/11 Ringtail Loop
- 10/12 The History of Mining in the Preserve on Dixie Mine Trail
- 10/18 Ethnobotany on the Cactus Trail
- 10/19 The Old Jeep Trail via Lost Dog Wash Trail
- 10/25 Windgate Pass Trail
- 10/26 Micro-desert in Brown's Ranch
- 11/1 Geology on the Gateway Loop
- 11/2 Big Saguaro Loop
- 11/8 Taliesin Overlook via Lost Dog Wash Trail
- 11/9 Cholla Mountain Loop
- 11/15 The Human McDowells(II) in Brown's Ranch
- 11/16 Inspiration Viewpoint on Windgate Pass Trail
- 11/22 Bell Pass Trail via Gateway Loop Trail
- 11/23 Introduction to Close-Up Photography on the Cactus Trail
- 11/29 Quartz Trail
- 11/30 Balanced Rock
- 12/6 Inspiration Viewpoint on Windgate Pass Trail
- 12/7 Cactus Trail
- 12/13 Desert Ecology
- 12/14 Sunrise Trail - End to End
- 12/20 The Old Jeep Trail via Lost Dog Wash Trail
- 12/21 The Big Picture Photography Hike at Gateway Trailhead
- 12/27 Gateway Loop from the Gateway Access Area
- 12/28 Ringtail Loop via Lost Dog Wash Trail

Common Questions About Our Hikes:

Do I need a reservation? No reservations are required unless indicated in the hike description.

Do I have to be an experienced hiker? No experience is needed. We highly recommend, however, that you read the description of the hike prior to attending in order to gauge if the hike is right for you.

Can I bring my dog? While dogs are welcome in the Preserve, we ask that you not bring them on the guided hikes.

What should I bring with me? Our website has a page called *Know Before You Go* that has all the information you need to prepare for a visit to the Preserve. If you'd like us to mail you a copy, please give us a call.

Do I just show up at the meeting place? Yes! Put on your hiking boots and hat, grab your water bottle, and join us. Our guides are well trained and they love what they do. Please join us on a hike soon.



Celebrate McDowell Sonoran Month Throughout October

Presented by American Express

ON THE TRAILS



Discovery Walks

Every Saturday in October beginning at 8 a.m., experts in desert ecology and ethnology will lead groups in the best living laboratory in town! Short walks will offer an intimate exploration of the hidden treasures of this area. These walks all take place on the same trail, and are intended to give participants who attend all four walks a richer understanding of this complex habitat.

- Oct 4 The Human History
- Oct 11 "Connections" Between Land and Living Things
- Oct 18 The Plants of the Gateway
- Oct 25 The Animals of the Gateway

Pathfinder Trailhead Hosts

MSC Stewards will be at the Lost Dog Wash and Sunrise trailheads to answer questions and provide information every Saturday and Sunday in October. Learn more about Pathfinders in the article on page 12.

Family Friday Sunset Series

These family programs, held every Friday evening in October (except October 31) beginning at 4:30 p.m. in the Lost Dog Wash Trailhead Amphitheater, are perfect for everyone. All programs focus on exploring and appreciating the natural world and will include hands-on activities for children. The casual setting, interesting programs and beautiful sunsets are the perfect way to end a busy week.

- Oct 3 REI, *Leave No Trace*
- Oct 10 Pinnacle Peak Park Staff, *Skull, Scat, and More*
- Oct 17 Phoenix Herpetological Society
- Oct 24 Adobe Mountain Wildlife Rehabilitation Center



Public Hikes

MSC Stewards guide Preserve visitors along more than 100 miles of trails on healthy lifestyle and themed hikes every Saturday and Sunday starting at 8 a.m. in October. Stewards interpret the many specimens of Sonoran Desert plants and animals as well as the geology of the McDowell Mountains. Participants learn how to "hike right" in the desert and visit many of the Preserve's hidden treasures. The hike schedule is listed on page 7 of this issue.

Preserve Inhabitants Lecture Series

Have you ever wondered if birds can change colors? Or, how plants and animals have adapted to this desert's harsh climate? The Preserve is home to many plants and animals that have secrets that might surprise you. Join five scientists as they share amazing tales of their favorite Preserve residents every Wednesday night in October at 7 p.m. at Scottsdale Community College.

- Oct 1 Dr. John Alcock, *Solitary Bees*
- Oct 8 Dr. Dale Denardo, *Gila Monsters*
- Oct 15 Dr. Glenn Walsberg, *The Preserve's Small Mammals*
- Oct 22 Dr. Kevin McGraw, *Coloration in Birds*
- Oct 29 Dr. Ron Rutowski, *Butterflies*



Hydrogen House Exclusive Tour and Lunch

Hydrogen House Tour and Lunch on October 22 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. provides a more in-depth look at this innovative project. This exclusive behind the scenes tour of Hydrogen House is for those who want to live on Earth and leave a lighter footprint. Learn about the innovations that make this spectacular building in the country. Lunch from the Herb Box Catering Company is limited.

IN THE COMMUNITY



Current Issues in Conservation Lecture Series

It is time for you to envision the future of our community and help to take the next bold steps in conservation efforts. Every Thursday in October experts share their views on how conservation efforts impact sustainability and benefit society. Speakers gear their presentation to the layman while sharing current, locally-relevant, scientific information. Lectures will be held at Mountain View Park Community Center and begin at 7 p.m.

- Oct 2 The Decision Theater
- Oct 9 Dr. Bruce Rittman, *Water and Energy Sustainability*
- Oct 16 Dr. Robert Roberson, *Biofuels in the Desert*
- Oct 23 Dr. Harvey Bryan, *Building Impacts in Ecologically Responsible Environments*
- Oct 30 Dr. Ben Minteer, *Environmental Ethics and Policy*



Hydrogen House Open House

Plan to visit one of the most innovative green built projects in the country, if not the world, at the Hydrogen House Open House Saturday, October 11, from 8 am to noon. After 3 years of planning and 1.5 years of construction, the first green hydrogen house in the country is complete. The project has numerous passive and active sustainable design features including the use of mass, radiant barriers, and convection air for natural cooling. In addition to using materials for a healthy living environment, the house will improve the air, recycle the water, and literally integrate into the landscape. Photovoltaic (solar electric) power will produce hydrogen from water to use as a fuel for heating water, cooking meals, producing electricity, and running the cars. Tickets for the event are \$10 in advance or \$15 the day of the event, and can be purchased by calling MSC at (480) 998-7971.

Focus on Conservation Photo Exhibit

See the exhibit that resulted from MSC's highly successful Focus on Conservation photography contest. The show is scheduled to open at the Scottsdale ArtSpace at the Civic Center Library/Scottsdale Center for the Arts on October 6th and will run through November 5, 2008. Meet the artists at a reception to be held Friday, October 10th at 5:30 p.m. when MSC will announce the photo contest winners for the Best in Show, Best Macro and Best Color.



Complete information about all of these programs can be found at www.mcdowellsonoran.org.

Community Partners

5th Annual Tour de Scottsdale

Sunday, Oct. 5th, 2008

70-mile race to begin at 7:30 a.m.

Family Fun Ride to begin at 8:30 a.m.

Awards ceremony to begin at 11 a.m.

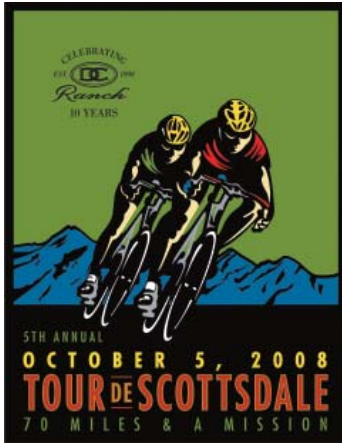
Tour Expo opens at 9 a.m.

Registration fees vary from \$85-\$150 depending on date of registration and either single entry or tandem.

Family Fun Ride is free of charge

\$10 for a Tour shirt.

Register online at www.dcbadventures.com.



As a demonstration of their commitment to environmental stewardship and the work of the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy, MSC Preservation Partner DC Ranch will once again host the Tour de Scottsdale. This year, the “105,000 miles for the McDowells” challenge will solely benefit MSC. The beautiful course provides an opportunity to appreciate the splendor of the McDowell Mountains, and reminds us of just what it is we’re working so hard to protect. Additional sponsors of the event include the Scottsdale Convention and Visitors Bureau, the City of Scottsdale, Bicycle Showcase, Circle West Architects, Market Street, and Chipotle.

The Tour is a DC Ranch Community Foundation signature event and is sanctioned by USA Cycling. The 1,500-rider goal will break previous records for the Tour, which has become a tradition among cycling enthusiasts who enjoy the challenging course and scenic vistas. Competitive cyclists and families alike are invited.

Cookout at the Ranch

Saturday, October, 25, 2008, 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

MacDonald’s Ranch, 26540 North Scottsdale Road



This event is a must for locals and tourists alike! Upon arrival at MacDonald’s Ranch, a haywagon transports guests a short ride through the desert to the event space. There, guests find an eclectic assortment of live entertainment including The Stragglers C&W Band with Geoff Conklin, Bill Waters and the Air Major Flying Dog Show, demonstrations with live birds of prey and the release of a rehabilitated great horned owl, dancing led by line-dancing instructor Mindy Hubbard and much more. To make sure you are well-fed, the Outback Steakhouse puts on quite a spread.



The event benefits Scottsdale-based conservation organizations including Pinnacle Peak Association - Friends of the Scenic Drive, McDowell Sonoran Conservancy, Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park and the Pinnacle Peak Rotary. The auction includes dinners at local restaurants, arts and crafts from local artists, golf at local courses and souvenirs from pro teams. Also available: Complimentary door prize drawing, plus drawing for \$25,000.

Advance ticket purchase is highly recommended as tickets are sold-out by the event date. Advance ticket prices: Adult (\$47), Child (\$15), Reserved Table (8 adult tickets - \$370), Table Sponsor (\$950.) Tickets can be purchased by visiting www.gppaaz.org, www.scenicdrive.org, or calling the Cookout Hotline (480) 580-0593.

Thank you EVENT SPONSORS: Outback Steakhouse, Desert Foothills Cookouts, *A Peak at the Peak* magazine, and MacDonald’s Ranch!

The Tour de Scottsdale includes:

- A 70-mile challenging scenic ride.
- A free 2.5-mile Family Fun Ride, beginning at 8:30 a.m., allows families to enjoy a taste of the Tour together.
- Five support stations along the course keep cyclists and their bikes in good shape with food, bike support from Bicycle Showcase, and medical care provided by South-west Ambulance.
- The Tour Expo, beginning at 9 a.m. race day, provides a festive atmosphere of cycling fashion, a beer garden and wine bar (opening at 10 a.m.), food, music and fun on Market Street.
- 2008 Tour Launch Party, where entrants can enjoy food and drinks at Fleming's
- Prime Steakhouse and Wine Bar from 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, Oct.



Preservation Partner Profile: American Express

MSC has a vital need for volunteers to participate in trail building and maintenance of the Preserve. To help fulfill this need, American Express employees volunteered for a family-friendly work project in April. Teams from American Express worked alongside MSC Stewards to devegetate and revegetate the Gateway parking area in the Preserve.

Also, American Express employees provide critical funding through workplace giving programs to help MSC educate the public about the importance of conservation and to encourage them to get into the Preserve and experience the restorative effects of nature.

Whether it is feeding the hungry, mentoring students, building homes for the homeless or cleaning up the environment, tens of thousands of American Express employees are inspired to serve their communities through volunteerism and personal financial contributions every year. American Express views this activity as an extension of the service ethic that lies at the heart of their business.

“We encourage good citizenship by supporting organizations that cultivate meaningful opportunities for civic engagement by our employees and members of the community”, explains JoEllen Lynn, Manager,

Community Affairs Phoenix. She continues, “The mission of our program is to bring to life the American Express value of good corporate citizenship by supporting diverse communities in ways that enhance the company’s reputation with employees, customers, business partners and other stakeholders. We do this by supporting visionary not-for-profit organizations like the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy.”

Established in 1850 in New York, American Express Company was among the first and most successful express delivery businesses to arise during the rapid westward expansion of the United States. More than 150 years after it was established, American Express has never been more competitive. It is a world leader in providing charge and credit cards to consumers, small businesses and corporations. It is the world’s largest travel agency, offering travel and related consulting services to individuals and corporations around the world.



Featured Program *Pathfinders*

By BJ Tatro, Steward and Pathfinder Chair

Have you been to the Lost Dog or Sunrise Trailhead and wondered who those helpful blue-shirted people were? They are MSC pathfinders! Pathfinders are MSC stewards who have completed additional training and serve at the trailheads to promote respect for and safe enjoyment of the Preserve.

In 2005, MSC started the pathfinder program and it has grown steadily since then. Pathfinders now work from October into the beginning of May. At Lost Dog Wash you will find them there in the mornings on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday. At Sunrise, they serve on weekend mornings. And, they will be stationed at Gateway as soon as the temporary parking lot opens in the fall.

The plan is to have pathfinders at all official trailheads as new ones open and to expand the days and hours of coverage during hiking season. As you can imagine, this will take more pathfinders than we have now—so consider taking advantage of the opportunity to join our ranks. Once the requirements for becoming a steward have been met, the pathfinder-to-be takes the MSC Natural History courses (flora, fauna, geology, and human history of the McDowells). First aid and CPR are recommended, but not required. Once the educational requirements have been met, the new pathfinder serves with a seasoned pathfinder at the trailhead.



Pathfinders do not patrol while on duty. They stay at the trailhead, often near the map in order to show trails and answer questions about the Preserve. You might think just standing at the trailhead would be boring but if you ask a pathfinder,



nothing could be better! Standing in the midst of the McDowell Mountains in the early morning, listening to the birds sing, admiring the desert plants in all their seasonal stages, teaching and helping visitors from all over the world is a perfect fit for us.

Last season, we estimated that pathfinders had contact with well over 5,000 visitors. Some were regulars who stopped to say “hi” or report something that needed attention in the Preserve. Others were first-time users who needed guidance about the trail best suited to their fitness level or time. Then there were the children—from toddlers in their mom or dad’s backpack to scout troop, pathfinders greeted them and often were asked to do some on-the-spot teaching about how to be safe in the desert environment.

Pathfinders are the Preserve’s customer service representatives—they are ones who help find those lost keys, show someone how to open the restroom door (despite the fact that it is clearly marked!), describe how to read the trail signs and use the emergency markers, identify a cell-phone photo of a plant or beetle, patiently explain why walking off the trail is harmful to the environment (and the visitor), calm fears about a rattlesnake chasing a hiker, pass out water to those who might come without any, show panting puppies how to use the doggie water fountain, and on and on and on.

One thing we know for sure...visitors really appreciate the pathfinders and all the MSC stewards who build, maintain, and patrol the trails. They tell us all the time and we have the joy of sharing the compliments with the others in MSC who work on the trails and behind the scenes.

Stop by and say “hello” to a pathfinder at the trailhead—or better yet, sign up to become a pathfinder! ■

Calling all Volunteers

The next Steward training course is scheduled for Saturday, September 13, 2008. Class will run from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. and will be held at the DC Ranch Village Health Club and Spa at Union Hills and Thompson Peak Parkway. Cost is \$30 and includes resource materials and lunch. Registration for the course is required. Prospective students can email info@mcdowellsonoran.org or call 480-998-7971 to receive registration forms.

An Interview with a Scientist *Dr. Robby Roberson*



Dr. Roberson joined ASU in 1989 and is currently an Associate Professor in the School of Life Sciences and the Director of the Life Sciences Electron Microscope Facility. He received a Ph.D. from the Department of Plant Biology at the University of Georgia. Dr. Roberson is also an adjunct faculty member in the Department of Biology at the University of Texas at El Paso and an adjunct research scientist at the Centro de Investigacion Cientifica y de Educacion Superior de Ensenada, BC (CICESE), Ensenada, Baja California, Mexico. Dr. Roberson has a connection to MSC through Executive Director, Ruthie Carll. He served on her Master Degree committee and influenced her love of nature - particularly of nature's tiny wonders.

When do you remember first being interested in science?

When seeing a movie of red blood cells moving through capillaries in 5th grade science class.

What are you currently researching?

My research focus is cell biology and more specifically, the cells of fungi. Questions we ask in my lab include “How do cells function?”, “What can we learn from them?”, and “How can we use what we learn?” Studies are performed both at the light and electron microscope levels. Advanced light microscope methods (e.g., laser scanning confocal, computer enhancement) are used extensively to study the organization and/or behavior of cells. My current work is providing significant resources for biofuels.

Why are you passionate about the environment?

Ultimately, there is nothing more important. All things in life are connected. We study cells and see the universe.

Why should John Q. Public care about your research?

I know John..... From a very practical point of view, finding alternative energy sources is mandatory. From a philosophical point of view, realizing how all life on the planet is related and how life has evolved helps us know our place in the ‘big picture.’

Microbial Biofuel: Tubes in the Desert

from The Biodesign Institute of Arizona State University

The Biodesign Institute is part of an ASU initiative to develop a new form of biofuel using tiny microorganisms called cyanobacteria. These photosynthetic bacteria contain lipids (fats) that can be converted directly to high-energy fuels such as biodiesel. Biodiesel can be used as fuel in internal combustion engines or directly by power generating stations. The bacteria would be grown in transparent tubes; so the project has become known as the “Tubes in the Desert” initiative. This renewable technology holds significant promise, with an estimated yield that is many times greater than corn, switch grass, or other plant-based approaches. Furthermore, the bacteria are “fed” carbon dioxide--such as that from conventional coal burning power plants--creating a carbon neutral energy source.

Unlike plant-based fuel sources that produce ethanol, the use of these bacteria in the production of biofuel eliminates the need for costly and complex processing, and it allows for the efficient use of land unsuitable for crops. This lack of competition with food production, along with the higher yield per acre, gives the bacteria-based system the potential to replace fossil fuels in a major way, something which other biofuels cannot accomplish given the land mass required and/or growing cycles.



Artist rendition of a microbial biofuel facility

*Dr. Roberson is speaking during our **Current Issues in Conservation** lecture series during McDowell Sonoran Month.*

A pre-lecture cocktail reception with Dr. Roberson will be held for McDowell Sonoran Society members.

To learn more about the McDowell Sonoran Society, please call Linda Raish, MSC Community Development Director (480-998-7971 x 101) or visit our [website](#).

“I hike in the Preserve and notice people wearing blue shirts that say ‘Steward’. From your website, I gather this is what you call you volunteers. Why do you call them Stewards?” - Judy in Phoenix

The word “steward” originated from the Old English terms “sti,” meaning a hall, and “weard,” meaning a ward or caretaker. Another common definition is “to steward something is to take care of something that belongs to another”. Originally, a steward was a manager of the local noble’s hall and property. The term evolved, and is now applied to those who manage or oversee property on behalf of others. Land trusts such as MSC apply the terms “steward” and “stewardship” to the persons and actions dedicated to caring for land placed in protected status by the public. MSC’s mission is to protect City of Scottsdale and State Trust lands within the planned boundary of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve.

MSC stewards are individuals who have decided to act on their interest in preservation. They volunteer to patrol, build, and maintain desert trails, repair damaged desert terrain, greet and assist visitors to the preserve, lead hikes and provide office and other logistical support to the stewardship program. They receive education covering the Scottsdale Preservation Division operations, MSC mission, organization and history, desert trails, patrol procedures, trail maintenance, and public contact techniques. Stewards interested in serving as Pathfinders or Hike Leaders receive additional education.

The basic steward uniform is a “steward blue” shirt with MSC’s logo and the word “Steward,” fore and aft. Bike stewards wear a yellow jersey that has become a hit with the local bee population. Stewards demonstrating exceptional skills and contributions may serve as mentors to new stewards or be designated “Master Stewards.”

You may encounter a steward patrolling on the trail, repairing damaged terrain out in the desert, or in the MSC office. Wherever you encounter one of our stewards, you have met a person dedicated to the appreciation and preservation of the Sonoran Desert. ■

The Preserve Up Close *Ground Squirrels*

The McDowell Sonoran Preserve has a large number of rodent species. It is interesting, then, that we rarely see mice, rats, and squirrels while visiting the Preserve. This is primarily due to the nocturnal behavior of these tiny mammals. There are, however, two species that are diurnal (active during the daytime) and you are very likely to see them. Both of these species are often mistakenly identified so let’s take a moment to learn about these very interesting inhabitants of our Preserve.



Don’t Call Me A Prairie Dog

Round-tailed ground squirrels (*Spermophilus tereticaudus*) are semi-colonial meaning they live in groups but each have their own burrow. These burrows are constructed in low-lying, sandy flats, usually under creosote bushes. Their burrows have multiple entrances and rooms including larders, bedrooms, and bathrooms! To prevent flooding during a heavy rain, round-tailed ground squirrels build ‘sink traps’ inside each entrance thus preventing water from flooding the burrow.

They are well adapted for desert life. They are active in the spring and fall, eating seeds, grasses, insects and flowers. While they can get most of the water they need from the food they eat, they do need to supplement their diet by drinking water. In the heat of summer, the fur on their undersides sheds and they find shady places to lie, pressing their exposed skin to the cool ground (see photograph below.)

Adult round-tailed ground squirrels will warn their neighbors when danger approaches by giving a sharp single whistle and stamping on the ground with their hind feet. When others hear this whistle, they all run to their burrows and then look around.

In the middle of summer and winter, they retreat to their burrows and go into a torpor, or deep sleep. This is different from hibernation as they can be woken if disturbed. This helps them survive times when food is scarce or the temperature is too hot or cold.





The secrets and treasures of forests and fields have always intrigued me. As a child walking the woods in New York state I was fascinated by an old building foundation barely visible under brush and saplings. An arrowhead in a newly plowed field or the remains of an old campsite had my imagination running wild with the possibilities of who, why and when. The rather mundane secrets, not difficult to discover, were easily bypassed by those intent on a destination, looking for wildlife or admiring the oaks and maples.

The Preserve has wonderful secrets and treasures that innocuously rest among the cactus, creosote bushes and rocky outcroppings. The incredible Hohokam petroglyphs and pottery shards are the perfect invitation to imagine the lives of the ancient ones that preceded us. Steward, Len Marcisz evokes great images when he describes the native people hunting deer in Lost Dog Wash. What were the faces like of those who dug the agave roasting pits not far from the Village Health Club? Mountain springs were a “destination” for the ancient people not unlike Scottsdale is today for numerous visitors.

The rich ranching and mining histories of the area leave their subtle secrets as well. From unwelcome invasive grasses to old barbed wire and cans they all tell a story that we can only imagine. Were the cowboys working Doc Crosby’s ranch (DC Ranch) the humans who left the “camp” just off Prospector Trail in the Interior?

I like to remind myself of these less obvious treasures of the Preserve when appreciating the glow of the McDowells at the golden hour, photographing wild flowers, or hiking the wash on Quartz Trail. With each little treasure there is a mystery, a story of another human being on their life journey. While appreciating all of this we must maintain a strong commitment to leaving these treasures and secret places untouched and undisturbed within the Preserve. A pottery shard on a bookshelf will never provide the same joy as simply seeing or imagining the treasures on the desert floor.

Having the opportunity to be a steward of this magnificent preserve is truly a gift. ■

Don't Call Me A Chipmunk!

Harris antelope ground squirrels (*Ammospermophilus harrisi*) are more solitary than their cousins and are rarely found together except when mating. They dig their own burrows, often in rocky areas, and slopes and often build several burrows within their territory. They are also diurnal and have special adaptations that allow them to be active even during the hottest hours of the day. Unlike round-tailed ground squirrels, they are active year-round and therefore store little fat. This gives a leaner appearance.

Antelope ground squirrels are grey, with one white stripe along both sides of the body from shoulder to rump. They have a bushy tail that is covered with black and white hair.



A white ring encircles each eye, giving them a spectacled appearance and the soles of their feet are heavily haired.

Harris antelope squirrels are vigorous runners, stopping frequently to dig things up from the ground. They are omnivores, eating seeds, fruit, stems and roots, insects, and carrion. Their cheek pouches have considerable capacity allowing food supplies are carried back and stored in burrows, under rocks, or in some other shelter.

They commonly sit up on their hind feet. When disturbed, they run with their tails straight up in the air, uttering chirps and squeaks as they hurries to a nearby burrow. Before entering the burrow, these squirrels often stop, call, and stamp its forepaws sounding the alarm to those living nearby. ■



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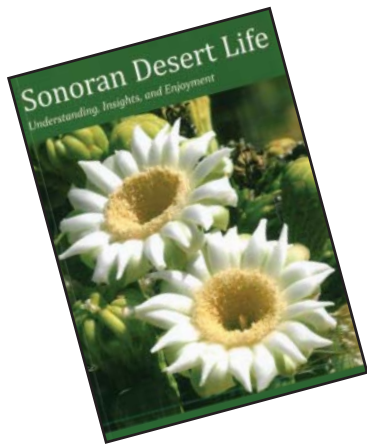
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Book Launch for MSC Volunteer Gerald Rosenthal's Book *Sonoran Desert Life*

The launch of a new book *Sonoran Desert Life* and conversation with the author will be held at a reception on Saturday, Oct. 18, from 6 to 8 pm. at the Promenade Center Courtyard. This book was written by McDowell Sonoran Conservancy volunteer Gerald A. Rosenthal, who will present a behind the scenes look at his research process.



Sonoran Desert Life Features:

- 425 photographs aid in understanding the wonder and complexity of the desert
- Descriptions of over 300 plant species to help identification
- Fascinating aspects of desert animals' behaviors and roles are described
- A comprehensive glossary

Ticket price includes a signed copy of the book. Tickets are available for \$30 per person or \$40 per couple by calling the MSC office at (480) 998-7971.

