

Mountain Lines

Fall 2014



Have a "Pawsitive"
Preserve Experience

Tips for hiking with your dog

Managing a
30,000 Acre Preserve

Planning, hard work and commitment

Nighttime on the Trails

Midnight research adventures





Mike Nolan, Executive Director

Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve is the largest city-owned Preserve in the country, and managing it on a day-to-day basis involves the coordination of hundreds of people—city staff,

the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy staff, and citizen stewards. Three key characteristics define the management challenge: the Preserve's size, its large and growing number of visitors, and the rich ecological diversity we hope to protect for the long term.

Size alone offers challenges. At more than 47 square miles, the Preserve is larger than the city of Tempe by some 5,000 acres, and almost 50 percent larger than the island of Manhattan (where 1.6 million people live). Travel around its periphery by surface street can be slow. Finding and getting to areas in the interior that need maintenance, or to people that need help, requires good pre-planning and a strategy. You'll read in this issue about how personnel ranging from professional rescuers to stewards in Construction and Maintenance and Patrol are effective despite the size of the Preserve.

They need to be effective, because they are called on more and more as visitation

increases. Last season estimates are that 600,000 visitors hiked, biked, or rode a horse on the Preserve's 120 miles of trails. Visitors from across the valley and around the world are discovering the pleasures of the Preserve. Such growing use inevitably results in wear and tear on trails and facilities, more people seeking information and trail guidance, and an increase in rescue calls from people who need help.

Despite its land-use history—which includes decades of ranching and several severe fire events—the Preserve remains biologically diverse, a characteristic we hope we can maintain as usage increases and population grows around the borders. Ongoing monitoring coupled with scientifically-based management plans offer the best opportunity to protect the Preserve's ecology. McDowell Sonoran Conservancy citizen scientists working with city preserve managers and professional scientists are at the front line of efforts to protect the Preserve for the long-term.

The Preserve is a unique, large, protected landscape. The challenge and responsibility of protecting it require hard work, creativity, and coordination. Thankfully, many devoted people contribute in a variety of ways to ensure that it remains for future generations to enjoy. 🌿

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Conservancy Up Close: Meet Ed Phillips | 3 |
| Managing a 30,000 Acre Preserve | 4 |
| Watchable Wildlife: Nighttime on the Trails..... | 8 |
| A Day in the Life of a C&M Crew Member | 12 |
| Mountain Rescuers: Unsung Heroes..... | 14 |
| Have a "Pawsitive" Preserve Experience | 16 |
| Families in Nature: Trail Patrollers Assist Families..... | 18 |
| Partner Profile: Lexus..... | 19 |
| Tour de Scottsdale..... | 20 |

Cover photo: A dramatic Arizona sky seen from the Tom's Thumb area.
Photo by: Kevin Spatt, 2014 MSC photo contest entrant.

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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Edward Phillips Joins Conservancy Staff

By Staff Writer



The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy is pleased to announce that Edward Phillips has joined the Conservancy staff as the new Director of Development and Communications. An accomplished fundraising and marketing executive, Edward brings more than 20 years of valley nonprofit development expertise.

"I grew up in Cave Creek hiking the surrounding mountains most of my life," says Edward. "Coming to the Conservancy to head up the fundraising and communications efforts for the Preserve was like coming home."

Taking the reins right after the first of the year, Edward put on the highly successful McDowell Sonoran Conservancy Breakfast held at Sassi in North Scottsdale. He is now working to secure sponsorships for the Tour de Scottsdale that each year supports the Conservancy. He also oversees the McDowell Sonoran Society and is implementing several

new features in the program to share the Conservancy story with donors and the general public. Edward also acts as staff support for the Mountain Lines team, who each quarter brings you amazing stories about the work of the Conservancy and from the Preserve.

Edward's professional experience includes annual and capital campaigns, major gifts, events, and donor acquisition and development. He has created and implemented successful fundraising campaigns for healthcare, social services, and education nonprofits. Edward has his MBA from the University of Phoenix and was trained in development at Notre Dame University as well as being certified in the Principles of Fundraising by The Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University. Edward also is a certified feature film writer having studied at UCLA and enjoys working on his screenplays for fun when away from Conservancy work. Welcome Edward! We're happy to have such an accomplished person join the team! 🐦

One of many beautiful hiking trails in the Preserve. Photo by: Dennis Eckel, 2014 photo contest entrant.





Managing a 30,000 Acre Preserve

By Peggy McNamara, McDowell Sonoran Conservancy steward
McDowell Sonoran Field Institute citizen scientist

How does a small City of Scottsdale staff successfully manage the 30,000-plus acres that make up the McDowell Sonoran Preserve? The answer is with lots of detailed planning, and with help from hundreds of volunteers.

When visiting the Preserve, you may see McDowell Sonoran Conservancy volunteers, known as stewards, advising visitors at the trailhead or leading a hike. You may encounter crews doing construction or maintenance work on a trail. Occasionally you may attend a nature talk in an amphitheater, or view a trailside exhibit set up by our wildlife specialists. But these visible activities are like the tip of an iceberg. A lot more work goes into managing the Preserve that is not seen by its visitors.

It would be fun and interesting to learn about the Preserve Coordinators job by shadowing one for a typical day. But there is no such thing as a typical day in that job. Claire Miller, Preserve Coordinator, puts it this way. "I come to work planning to do some scheduled task, but then it gets overcome by an unexpected event." She laughs and says, "That keeps things interesting!" Miller also adds, "And when I need to work at the computer in my office at the trailhead, it may not be as great as working outdoors, but I can still look out the windows and see the mountains and the desert. This has got to be the best job on the planet!"

Miller says that one of the biggest parts of that job is managing people.



Steward Art Ranz leads a Gateway Loop trail hike. Photo by: Dennis Eckel.

Too often she sees someone pilfering desert resources and tactfully explains that the rocks, ranch artifacts, plants, animals, skeletons (both plant and animal) cannot be taken home. This becomes particularly difficult when the treasure is in the hands of a child and the parent is indignant about the regulation. Preserve staff also instruct people about trail etiquette and about not wandering off the trail. They advise hikers about choosing a trail and how to be properly prepared to hike it. They also post signs at the trailheads to warn visitors about bees, rain damage and any trail hazards.

Another big job is rescuing people and dogs. Each of these emergencies consumes many hours. In the case of people, the Preserve Coordinator is in constant radio contact with rescuers from the Scottsdale Police and Fire departments and with mountain rescue teams from Scottsdale and Phoenix. Detailed knowledge of the Preserve is critical to instruct the rescuers about what trails they should use to reach the victim in the least amount of time. Sometimes the rescue involves directing a helicopter to the nearest and best landing site. The coordinator stops all other work until the victim is rescued and removed from the



Mapping the Preserve. Photo by: Marianne Jensen

Preserve. In the case of dog rescues, the coordinator often performs that rescue.

Although the rescue jobs are distressing, goofy things happen to counter-balance them. One such event occurred when a citizen called in a report about a mountain lion sighted in a particular area of Scottsdale near the Preserve. Arizona Game and Fish Wildlife Managers responded. They completed a visual inspection of the area, only to find that the mountain lion was actually a golden retriever dog.

But by far, the biggest job is planning. It takes 40% of a coordinator's time. Building new trails requires meticulous planning. It entails participating in surveys of an area, working with trail planners to select the best terrain for the placement of a maintainable and safe trail, working with professional trail building contractors who build the trails,

and making ongoing trail maintenance plans. Conservancy stewards and corporate volunteers almost always help with the trail building and maintenance activities. Scheduling these groups and getting the necessary tools and supplies delivered to the site requires detailed planning. When a helicopter is involved, the logistics can get tricky.

So, how does the Preserve Coordinator know when a trail needs maintenance? Hundreds of steward volunteers regularly hike, mountain bike, or ride their horses along more than 120 miles of trails and report back on locations that need work. The Conservancy trains these patrollers in spotting trail hazards and filing reports. The patrollers often carry pruners and other equipment with them. If the job is small enough, they do the work right then. The patrollers also pick up gar-

bage along a trail. But sometimes it's not possible for one person to remove the litter. Many abandoned cars and other heavy items need removal and have been removed in the past. Scheduling crews and equipment to remove these objects requires a detailed plan. Occasionally, a helicopter needs to carry the heavy loads to or from a work site. These activities and larger maintenance activities get detailed scheduling in advance.

Another task of the Preserve staff is writing grants. Getting money for special projects is a part of the job. Without grant money many things like helicopter lifts, trailhead exhibits, and significant trail maintenance and trailhead construction projects would not get done due to lack of funds.

Did you know that the fauna in the Preserve falls under the auspices of the Arizona Game and Fish Department?

Every year, Arizona Game and Fish criss-cross the entire Preserve in a helicopter. Wildlife specialists count the number of large mammals such as deer, javelina, and mountain lions, and assess their health. Based on this annual survey, Game and Fish decides how many bow-hunting licenses to issue for the hunting season. This strategy helps to keep the animal population in a healthy balance with their available food sources.

Don't forget all the mundane things that need to get done on a scheduled basis, such as trash collection and facilities cleaning. City workers and contractors do that work. But the Preserve Coordinator totes the trash to the dumpster and checks the bathrooms for cleanliness, proper operation, and adequate supplies several times a day. Conservancy stewards stock the maps, brochures and mutt mitts at each trailhead, and the coordina-

tors inspect these supplies daily. The coordinators also walk the parking lots, amphitheaters, terraces and ramadas each day looking for litter, broken glass, and anything else that is out of place. "In addition to all of this," Miller says, "we sweep the buildings, remove cobwebs, clean display surfaces, and check the operation of the drinking fountains for people, dogs and horses. We are very detail oriented. A dirty bathroom, litter, missing maps or a broken drinking fountain can quickly destroy a visitor's good impression of the Preserve."

Then there are the citizen scientists of McDowell Sonoran Field Institute's (MSFI). They are trained volunteers who work with MSFI scientists to gather data about the Preserve's flora, fauna, geology and human history. The volunteer scientists on MSFI Science

Advisory Board use the data from these studies to manage the ecological health of the Preserve so that it can be enjoyed for generations to come.

Each of us has come to expect only the best at the Preserve. Fulfilling our expectations is a large, mostly invisible community comprised of a handful of staff and hundreds of volunteers quietly and efficiently working in the Preserve. A story told by a Conservancy steward illustrates the effectiveness of their good stewardship. It's about a photographer the steward met on one of the Preserve trails. Their conversation went something like this.

Steward, "How are you doing?"

Photographer, "Not too well. My hobby is travelling around the country to photograph litter in our parks. I can't find any here." 🍂

Steward and Scottsdale staff bike patrols are important in ongoing Preserve management. Photo by: Jerry Grather



Watchable Wildlife: Nighttime on the Trails— The Adventure

By Susan Handke
McDowell Sonoran Conservancy master steward
McDowell Sonoran Conservancy Field Institute citizen scientist



Imagine, if you will, a night so dark, with no moon, and only the stars sparkling in the midnight skies. It's a hot muggy July night, and there is a small group of us venturing out into the vast darkness. We each have a flashlight, or a headlamp, which is the only thing illuminating this journey. The night is quiet, but occasionally, a tree rustles, or there are some flapping noises by an unknown creature flying overhead. These are the adventures our group encounters. What are we doing in the Preserve, in a long lonely wash at midnight?

We are the Herpetology research team for the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy Field Institute. Our mission, led by our principal investigator, Dave Weber, is to go out and catalog the reptiles in our Preserve. We were given a special permit to be in the Preserve after closing. The hot summer moonless night is when our reptile friends are more apt to be out of their dens, looking for food, and regulating their body temperatures.

One night, in particular, is still fresh in my memory. Our small team headed out into the pitch black night. We couldn't really see where each of our footsteps landed on the rocky, vegetated wash. It was quiet and all we could see were the beams of our flashlights. Little critters, such as scorpions and spiders, were scurrying about as we shone our flashlights on the ground. A large Desert blonde tarantula froze in its spot. The quiet was broken by one of the team members yelling, "Snake!" There were some smaller boulders up ahead. They were perhaps two or three feet high. We swung our flashlights around the tops of the boulders...when we saw it! Curled up on top of one of boulders was an amazing Tiger rattler. It truly looked like a curled up "Cinnabon on a rock." In fact, it blended in so well with the boulder, we may have just walked past it. This was quite a find because no one had ever documented a Tiger rattler in the Preserve before, although many Diamondback rattlesnakes are seen. The buff-colored, softly striped body of the Tiger rattler was in contrast to the distinctive diamond-shaped pattern of the Diamondback. The Tiger was a little wary of us as we snapped photos. Dave took all the data for the snake which consisted of snake size, time and

Nighttime herpetology survey volunteers were rewarded with a Gila Monster sighting. Photo by: Marianne Jensen

location, ground and air temperatures, wind speed, skies, and moon phase. We noticed the snake's triangular-shaped head was much smaller than his body, but don't let that fool you. Its venom is a neurotoxin that is very potent. The snake started to uncurl and lazily roll down the side of the boulder and onto the ground. It rattled its very large rattle, giving us a little warning. We gave it a wide berth as it made for cover. We were all quite satisfied with the major find tonight.

Are there more treasures out there? Where and what kind?

We see several small lizards, such as whiptails and side-blotched, and

document each one. We found a tortoise den, but no one was home. We pass by the type of rock outcroppings where the chuckwalla, the third largest lizard in North America, favors to spend his time. Suddenly, someone yells, "Over here!" in the dark. We run over and in a little cove in the side of the wash was a beautiful Gila monster. The venomous Gila monster lives underground for 90 percent of its life, so it was quite an honor to see this large, orange and black patterned, lizard. It lives in burrows made by other animals, only to surface and feed on its favored food - eggs. It uses

its venom mostly for defense, compared to the Tiger rattler, who uses its venom to kill its prey. Again, Dave takes the data on this spectacular lizard, being oh so careful not to disturb its peace.

As the evening activities draw to a close, we felt very satisfied knowing we were able to document several reptile species for the Field Institute's Herpetological research survey. We walk out of the Preserve, respectfully leaving nothing but our footprints, shut off our flashlights, say a satisfied good night to our fellow "Herpers" and a quiet "Thank you" to the magnificent reptiles in our Preserve. 🦎

A nocturnal red-spotted toad. Photo by: Marianne Jensen





*The Lookout trail offers stunning views at an elevation exceeding 3800 feet.
Photo by Barry White*



A Day in the Life of a Construction and Maintenance Crew Member

By Bob Roliardi
McDowell Sonoran Conservancy steward



Walking through Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve, it's helpful to think of your hike as a kind of meditation. The more your eyes and mind focus, the more you see of the diversity of plant life, the mountains and the Arizona sky. You also see what was not here before – these modern trails. After all, there is really not a Preserve without the trails, because without the trails you cannot interact with this natural wonder in a thoughtful way.

So how did the trails get here? The City of Scottsdale and the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy (MSC) first developed a Master Trail Plan. Scottsdale, which owns the Preserve, then bid out work to companies that have the expertise and specialized equipment to build trails. These companies do the heavy lifting.

After that, the model for Preserve trail construction and maintenance varies from most other nature areas, such as parks and wilderness areas. In the Scottsdale model, Preserve staff coordinators don't have crews available for trail projects. Instead, their work teams are made up of the volunteer stewards who take part in the Conservancy's Construction and Maintenance (C&M) Program.

There are generally 10 to 12 scheduled projects per month of three to four hours in duration. Projects usually start at 8am, or earlier in summer months. About 40 stewards actively participate in the program, with about half being women. Scottsdale Preserve staff work alongside the stewards while providing direction and observing safe working practices. Every C&M steward is expected to work at his or her own pace, experience level and physical capability.

What are the common types of C&M activities? One of the most important is maintaining good trail conditions. This may include preventing and repairing erosion damage caused by seasonal rainstorms. Crews also regularly trim vegetation so it doesn't intrude on the trails. In newer areas of the Preserve (most recently Brown's Ranch), C&M volunteers close off old roads and trails that should no longer be used by planting cactus and installing fencing and signage to keep Preserve users on the city-designated trails. Another important task is removing invasive non-native plants. This is done to prevent the invasive plants from crowding out desirable native plants and increasing fire danger in the Preserve.

You don't have to spend hours in the gym to enjoy time on the trails with the C&M crew. There are important tasks for all abilities, whether it's swinging a pick, revegetating a disturbed area with prickly pear and barrel cacti, raking a finished trail, spreading cholla balls to close off old roads, or picking up trash. It's valuable work, providing great exercise, good team fun, and a better understanding of the beauty and complexity of the Sonoran desert.

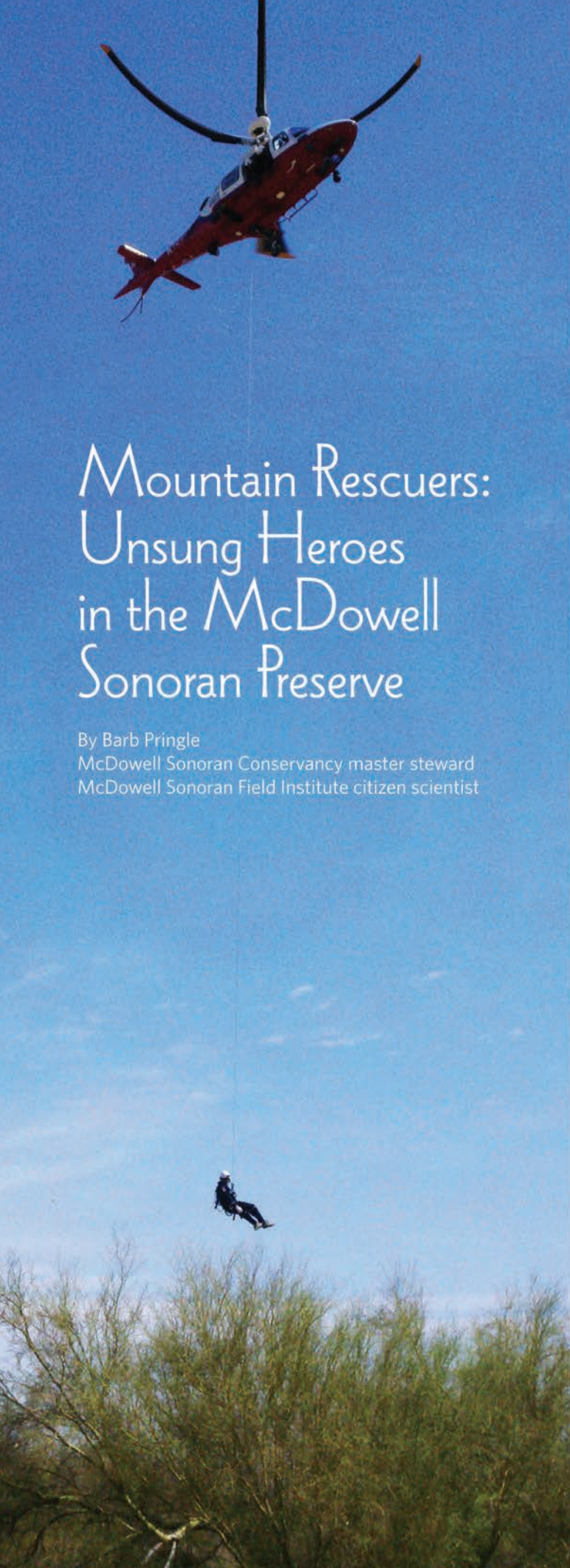
A recent C&M development is the certification of seven stewards as "crew leaders" who can plan and lead projects without direct Scottsdale staff supervision. This frees up limited city staff for additional projects.

Why should you come out on a C&M project? As Kathy Ann Walsh,

crew leader shares, "I became an MSC steward in 2008 because I wanted to learn to do trail work and, of course, help maintain our magnificent Preserve. Since then, I have learned a great deal about cactus, erosion control, trimming, and construction of trails. But, aside from all that, the best thing about C&M is the people, both the city staff and my fellow stewards. The camaraderie, humor and sense of accomplishment we share are priceless."

Bob Gordon has recently taken on the leadership responsibility for the entire C&M team. Bob himself has over seven years as a volunteer steward and many of his hours have been spent working on C&M crews. "Our C&M volunteer steward trail crew, consisting of whoever shows up with gloves, typically will hike in some distance carrying the tools required for the specific project. After one to two hours of self-paced work mitigating old road scars, restricting newly forming shortcuts, or restoring areas near new Preserve trails, the group will then do a headcount and return to the trailhead," he explains.

Next time you visit the Preserve, look beyond the natural beauty. Study the trails themselves and appreciate how they allow you to move across this wild land and enjoy its peace and beauty without degrading the land for future generations. These trails were built and are maintained by people like you - volunteers who donate their time to invest in all of our futures. 



Mountain Rescuers: Unsung Heroes in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve

By Barb Pringle
McDowell Sonoran Conservancy master steward
McDowell Sonoran Field Institute citizen scientist

Recently, two female hikers started an early hike to Tom's Thumb, when one became tired and dehydrated, and called 911. A rescue helicopter went up and spotted them from the air. They were brought to Scottsdale Fire paramedics, waiting at the trailhead to help. Happily for that distressed hiker, it takes only seven minutes from the time a rescue helicopter leaves fire station #610, located at 100th Street and Bell Road, to reach Tom's Thumb, explains Scottsdale Fire's Captain Tim Cooper, a charter member of Scottsdale's Technical Rescue Team.

Prior to 1991, such a rescue would likely not have occurred so quickly nor the result been so positive. Today, the 600,000 annual Preserve visitors enjoy the protective umbrella of a highly skilled team known as the Scottsdale Technical Rescue Team (TRT). They routinely train for emergencies, getting calls in all weather conditions, 24/7. They rescue all types of visitors - kids, dogs, mountain bikers, the elderly, and people with pre-existing medical conditions. So far in 2014, there have been 25 incidents in the Preserve requiring TRT services.

Where did these amazing people come from? In 1991, just as the idea of a citywide Preserve was taking wing, so too was a newly formed group of Scottsdale firefighters (then part of Rural Metro), sponsored and trained by Phoenix Fire in specialized technical rescues. Today, TRT personnel are trained and certified to respond to emergencies in water, mountains, trails, and trench or structural collapses. Underlying all those areas is rope rescue expertise, the heart of any technical rescue. The TRT also trains for highly specific situations, such as tree rescues and helicopter operations. Certification training, known as the "200 class", is available across the Phoenix metro area. Interested firefighters complete 200 hours of practical classroom and field training to become TRT-certified. Then, the "fun" starts, as they join in real-world rescues, often collaborating with other fire departments around the Valley. TRT personnel stay in top shape with regular gym time, weight-lifting at their fire stations, cycling and hiking. Station 610 is the Preserve's primary rescue link, though station 614 also has a technical rescue team available.

Station 610's close proximity to Gateway means that a call to 911 will be answered quickly and responders will have the necessary training and equipment for any emergency. About 75 percent of all calls are medical-related, says Cook, with most calls coming from the Gateway Loop area, though he's seen increased calls from Tom's Thumb and the newly opened Brown's Ranch

Scottsdale Fire's Technical Rescue Team (TRT) practice for difficult helicopter rescue extractions. Photo by: City of Scottsdale Fire department

area. So far this year, three helicopter rescues took place from station 610.

Rescues vary somewhat by season. Mid-November through April is busy, due mostly to ankle twists and falls. When the hot summer season rolls around in May and June, dehydration and hyperthermia join trips and falls as common emergencies.

Dogs are also frequent rescue patients. Sadly, six dogs died in the Preserve in 2013, because their owners didn't recognize signs of canine distress. "Dogs get into heat trouble more quickly than humans. They get hot and then suddenly can be in life-threatening or fatal heatstroke danger," Cook explains. Dogs don't sweat as efficiently as people, don't tolerate high temperatures for very long, can't tell you when they feel bad, and operate lower to the ground, where


it's much hotter. Proving his last point, Cook took a thermometer out into the Gateway area when the ambient temperature was 105°F. He measured at the rocky trail surface and found it was a foot-blistering 135°F! Dogs do not want to hike in 135° temperatures, so it's best to leave them at home.

Preserve visitors are fortunate to have access to the skills of Scottsdale's technical rescue team, so heed these important tips from Tim Cook for human and canine visitors:

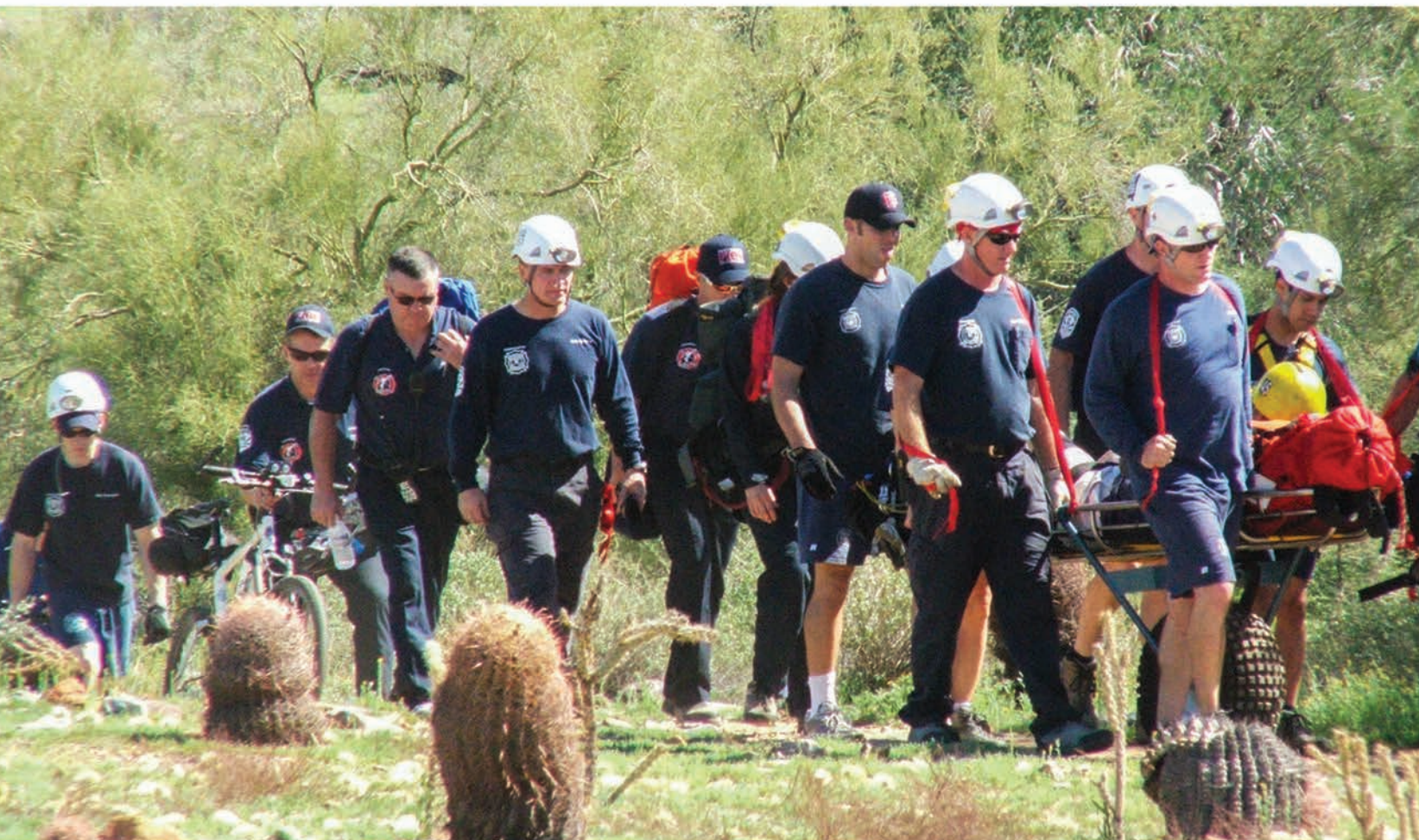
- Know both your and your dog's level of fitness. Don't try a 10-mile hike if you and your dog rarely get that much exercise. Ask Conservancy Pathfinders or Patrollers about the length of specific hikes.
- Be aware of seasonal weather dangers – summer, dehydration and

hyperthermia are risks; winter, shorter days and cold evenings can cause hypothermia.

- Always carry a cellphone and let someone know where you're headed. Ideally, hike with a friend.
- If you call 911, listen carefully to fire dispatch instructions and stay in the same location so TRT personnel can track you with their GPS locators.
- Take plenty of water for you and your dog.
- Wear protective footwear, hats, clothing, sunglasses and sunscreen.
- Stay on the trails!

Many thanks to Scottsdale Fire Captain Tim Cook for the information. Learn more at www.scottsdaleaz.gov/fire/safetytips. 

The Technical Rescue Team bring out an injured hiker from the Preserve's Gateway region. Photo by: City of Scottsdale Fire department





Be aware and prepared to safely hike with your dog in the Preserve. Photo by: Marianne Jensen

Have a Pawsitive Preserve Experience

By Jace McKeighan
McDowell Sonoran Conservancy lead steward

The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy is committed to keeping the McDowell Sonoran Preserve dog-friendly. That commitment manifests itself in many ways designed to enhance everyone's experience in the Preserve. We have a few tips for taking your dog out to the Preserve.

Always consider your dog's condition first. If your dog has not been hiking, it is no more prepared to take on a long walk than you would be if you had not trained. Always select a hike that is appropriate for your dog's condition and conditioning.

Overheating and dehydration are major concerns for both people and dogs all year. As temperatures began rising this past year, you probably saw signs at the trailheads pointing out that we deal with canine deaths and emergencies in the Preserve every year. Our goal is to reduce the number of these events. Try to hike early in the day to avoid the hottest temperatures. If you are hot or thirsty, assume that your dog is both hotter and thirstier than you. Your dog does not have as efficient a system for dealing with the heat as you do. To make matters more dangerous, the ground temperature your dog experiences is much hotter than the air temperature that you experience. Such temperature differences can be extreme in desert conditions. According to the National Park Service, the highest ground temperature recorded was 201° F in Death Valley, even though the maximum air temperature for that day was 128° F.

Give your dog plenty of rest and water on the trail. There are doggy water fountains at some of the trailheads, but be sure to carry ample water for you and your dog. Just like you, your dog needs to stay hydrated. Watch for signs of distress. Heat emergencies in dogs begin with heavy panting and difficulty breathing. A distressed dog's tongue and gums may appear bright red with thick saliva, and it may vomit or become unwilling to move. If your dog is frequently stopping or lying down, it's telling you that it needs a rest, a drink, and some relief from the heat. You can help cool your dog by wetting its body and/or placing cool packs in the groin area where your dog's legs meet its body and neck. Always remember that high temperatures may simply prevent your dog from completing the hike you want to do, so be prepared and willing to adjust your goals to keep your dog safe.

MSC is not only concerned with your dog's well-being, but the well-being of all Preserve users. Please be considerate of others and abide by the Scottsdale Preserve Ordinance. The Ordinance requires you to keep your dog on a leash at all times. The intent of the Ordinance is to protect both the Preserve and its many users. This will help you control your dog and avoid wild animals, other dogs, or the random cholla. A leash also lets other hikers know that your dog is controlled. Remember, although your dog is friendly, some of our Preserve users are afraid of dogs and an unleashed pet may cause them unnecessary anxiety.

Finally, be sure to pick up after your dog. Dog waste does not biodegrade like wild animal waste and contains harmful bacteria and parasites. Blue mitts are available at all trailheads and most pets will do their business within 100 yards of the trailhead. Please do not leave waste bags on the trail. Part of the privilege of bringing your dog to the Preserve is the obligation of carrying its waste out. It may be unpleasant, but I can tell you from personal experience that it's far more unpleasant to have to carry someone else's pet waste back to the trailhead. When you leave a bag on the trail, you're causing the next MSC steward that comes along to carry it out.

With these few simple tips, we hope that you and your dog continue to enjoy the Preserve. 🐾

Be respectful of other hikers by keeping your dog on a leash at all times - and making sure your dog is properly hydrated. Photo by: Colleen Collins



Trail Patrollers Assist Families in the Preserve

By Barb Pringle
 McDowell Sonoran Conservancy master steward
 McDowell Sonoran Conservancy Field Institute
 citizen scientist




“A re there really mountain lions out here?” “Have you ever seen a rattlesnake?” “What’s the best way to get back to the trailhead?” “Do you think my 10-year old can safely hike this trail?” These are just a few of the hundreds, if not thousands, of questions that the Conservancy’s trail patrollers answer on a regular basis as they cover the 115 miles of trails in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve.

The trail patrol program is an integral part of the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy’s mission to “champion the sustainability of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve for the benefit of this and future generations.” It would be just about impossible to responsibly and effectively manage the 30,000 plus acre Preserve without the patrollers, who are out there answering questions about critters and plants, ensuring that trails are safe for visitors, sharing information on trail routes, trail etiquette and safety, and doing minor maintenance along the trail. Carole Burton, Patrol Program Chair shares that “visitors from all over the world regularly approach our ‘Blue Shirts’ to ask questions, express concerns, praise our pristine trails, and thank us for our service.”

Trail patrollers logged an incredible 14,500 patrol hours in 2013. There are currently 370 foot patrollers, 65 mountain bike patrollers, and 15 equine patrollers. Just in the first three months of 2014, these committed volunteers reported 4,500 patrol hours, taking to the trails in good and bad weather alike.

It’s wonderful to see kids on the Preserve trails, because we all know (and scientific studies confirm) that time spent in nature is good for kids’ physical and psychological health. Trail patrollers offer a welcoming smile and helpful advice to families, and serve as a positive role model for youngsters, who often ask our patrollers about what they’re doing, and why they do it. It’s a great opportunity to excite and educate future generations about the diverse scientific disciplines that the Preserve offers up to those interested in learning more—including environmental and wildlife conservation, ecology, geology, botany, herpetology, archeology—and encourage them to think about being a volunteer in their own community. Plus, who doesn’t love to see the smiles on the faces of families enjoying a fun hike or bike ride on one of the Preserve trails?

The work of the Conservancy’s trail patrol team will become ever more critical, with the planned addition of 85 more miles of trails in the next one to two years up to the west and north of the Brown’s Ranch area. Hopefully, some of our future patrollers will include those curious kids who asked about snakes and mountain lions and the Blue Shirt people. 

Stewards are invaluable sources of information and inspiration to children visiting the Preserve. Photo by: Randy Raish

LEXUS Returns as Tour de Scottsdale Presenting Sponsor

Edward Phillips
Director of Development and Communications

The 2014 Tour de Scottsdale welcomes back Lexus as the Presenting Sponsor for Scottsdale's signature cycling event. The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy sincerely appreciates the ongoing support from our valley Lexus dealers. Through the Lexus Presenting Sponsorship significant funding is provided to the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy to support the conservation and protection of Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve.

The Lexus sponsorship along with others supporting the Tour de Scottsdale each year makes a significant impact in assisting with the cost of caring for the Preserve. The Conservancy, which manages the Preserve, consists of more than 600 volunteer stewards working in the

Preserve that now totals more than 30,000 acres. The sponsorship also supports ongoing research in the Preserve conducted by the McDowell Sonoran Field Institute. We thank Lexus for its continued support.

If you would like to join Lexus and other valley businesses by sponsoring the 2014 Tour de Scottsdale, please call Edward Phillips at (480) 998-7971 Ext 101, or email ed@mcdowellsonoran.org.



Join Our Circle of Friends

Through your support as a member of our Circle of Friends, the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy can continue to protect and preserve everything you enjoy about Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve. Your contribution is vital to keeping the Preserve beautiful and a place to be enjoyed by this and future generations. This shared appreciation of our Sonoran desert is why we invite you to become a Friend of the Preserve by returning the membership form below. You may also make your gift online at www.mcdowellsonoran.org just click Support.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friend of the Preserve - \$1 to \$99 | <input type="checkbox"/> Silver Circle of Friends - \$500 to \$999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Copper Circle of Friends - \$100 to \$249 | <input type="checkbox"/> Gold Circle of Friends \$1,000 to \$1,499 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bronze Circle of Friends - \$250 to \$499 | <input type="checkbox"/> Gifts of \$1,500 and above join our McDowell Sonoran Society |

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Mail to: McDowell Sonoran Conservancy • 16435 N. Scottsdale Rd. • Suite 110 • Scottsdale, AZ 85254

To donate online, go to www.mcdowellsonoran.org and click on "Donate Now."



16435 North Scottsdale Road
Suite 110
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Get the latest McDowell Sonoran
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Upcoming Event: 2014 Tour de Scottsdale

The 11th annual Tour de Scottsdale promises to be the largest in the event's history with more than 2,000 cyclists projected to participate in either the 30-mile or 70-mile event. The Tour de Scottsdale is a high profile event that provides critical support for the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy. Last year's Tour generated more than \$47,500 for the Conservancy to preserve and protect Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve. Funds generated from the Tour support the passionate work of the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy's volunteer stewards who provide education, research and advocacy—all crucial initiatives to ensure safe, respectful access to the diverse Sonoran desert ecosystem that is the Preserve.

11th Annual Tour de Scottsdale

Location: DC Ranch Race

Date: Sunday, Oct. 12th

For more information go to: <http://www.tourdescottsdale.net/event-info/>

For Tour de Scottsdale sponsorship information contact:

Edward Phillips at 480.998.7971 ext. 101 or email to ed@mcdowellsonoran.org.

Funds generated from the Tour support the upkeep of the Preserve that is cared for by passionate volunteer stewards.