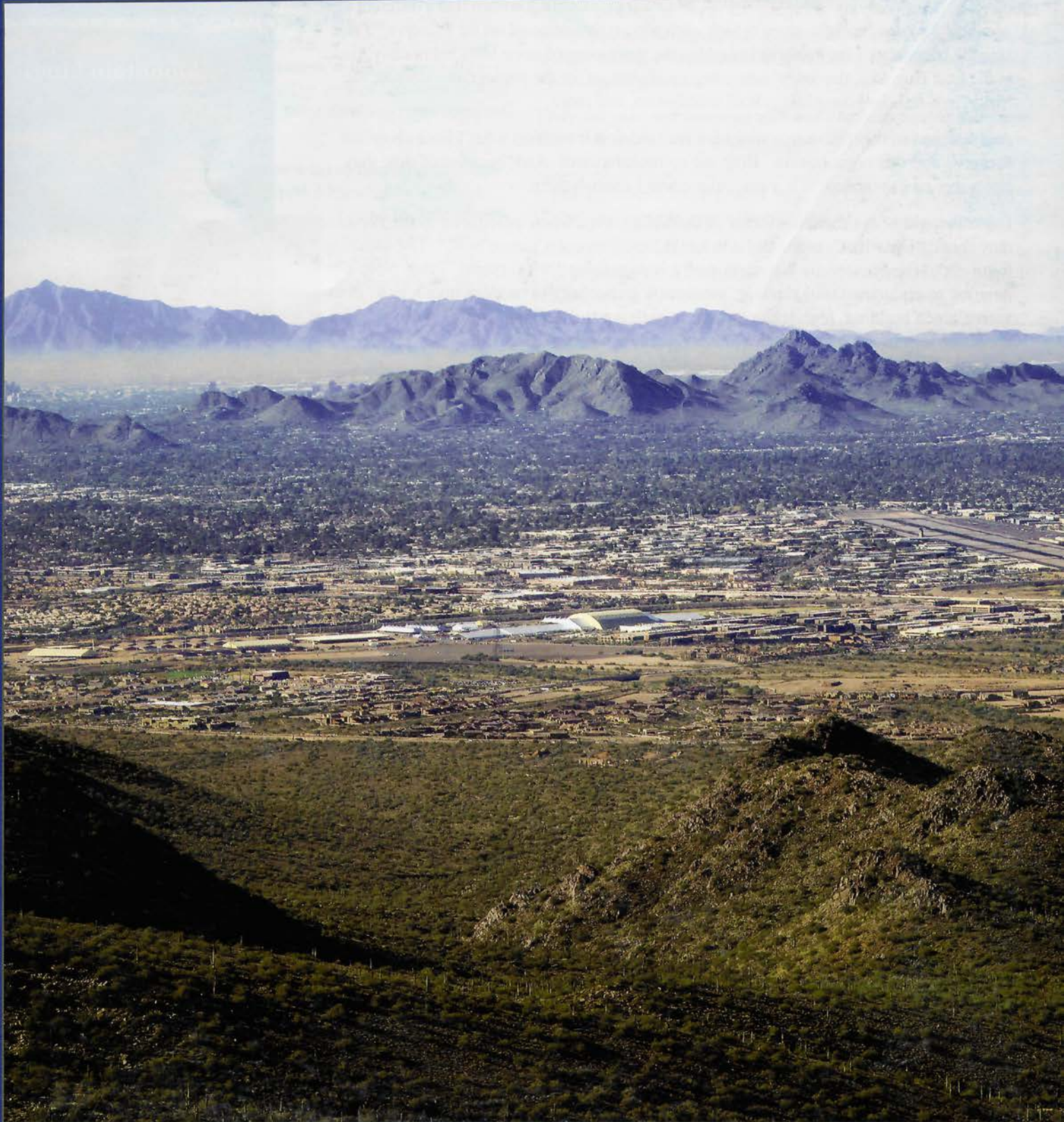


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# Mountain Lines

Vol.17, No.1. March, 2010. Preserving Our Desert and Mountains. [www.mcdowellsonoran.org](http://www.mcdowellsonoran.org)





This issue of the *Mountain Lines* is the first created by MSC's new Mountain Lines Team. The team met in mid-December to identify a theme for this issue as well as story ideas to bring the theme to life. The concept of "Living on the Edge" quickly floated to the top and we began brainstorming article ideas. This was when things really got interesting.

The team, which ranges from two high school students to a retired Pulitzer Prize nominee, was rapidly generating story ideas when it became clear that each member of the team had a different idea of what "the edge" meant – even though each perspective centered on the Preserve. There was the boundary of the Preserve (its edge), the sharp edge of stone tools historically made in the Lost Dog area, the 'edgy' new category *digital art* for the photography contest, the 'risky' live-fast-die-young lifecycle of wildflowers, and more.

As I listened to this discussion unfold, I realized that it typified what I love about the Preserve and this organization. Both are so multifaceted! And, because of this, they can never be duplicated. They are unique and I cherish them.

I also thought of the many residents of the Valley who, when introduced to the Preserve may think, "Oh – that's nice but I don't hike" or "I'm not a nature buff." The amazing thing about the Preserve is that there really is something for everyone. From plein air painting to endurance trail running, prehistoric archeology to modern man's most innovative green building, high tech research to walking the dog, and from a wheelchair to the sheer face of a rock slab – the Preserve can be a part of your life.

In this season, when the desert is at its most accessible, why not introduce someone to the Preserve? You may be starting a long and fruitful relationship!

See you on the trails!

Ruthie

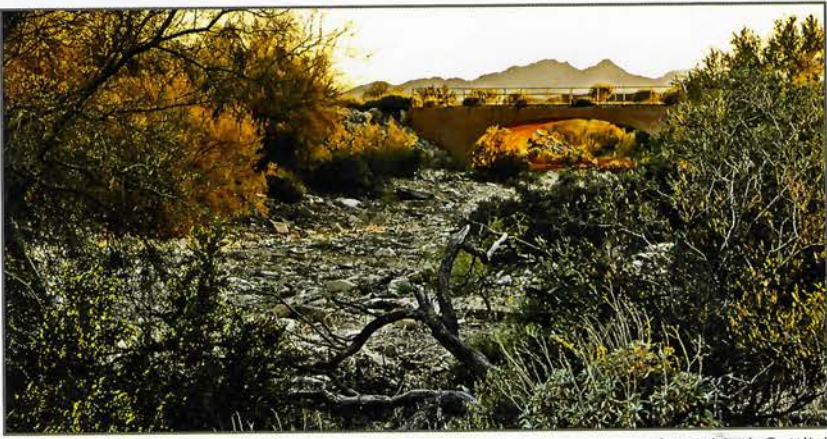


photo: Mark Gottlieb

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Cover Photo: The growth of Scottsdale encroaching on the bajada of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve brings the needs of wildlife and the desires of residents into perpetual conflict.  
©Don Bierman with permission to the MSC.

About MSC

The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy champions the completion and sustainability of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve for the benefit of this and future generations. We connect the community to the Preserve through public and private partnerships, environmental education and stewardship.

Mountain Lines

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The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Creative design donated by Pilot Creative.

# A Vertical View of the McDowell Mountains

By Mark Brontsema, Director of the Arizona Climbing and Adventure School

Almost hidden from view lies a part of the northern McDowell Mountains that few have ventured into even to this day. It offers overwhelming landscapes and vistas, yet is still close to the city; the desert is a place that hides its secrets well. This area is home to the largest concentration of granite rock climbing routes in the Phoenix/Scottsdale area. The towering vertical slabs are similar to the geological granite features one finds at Joshua Tree National Park – a climbing mecca in southern California. The McDowell Mountains offer over 200 climbing routes, many of which are worth climbing over and over again. The seasonal changes of light and shadow are enough to make the same climbing route seem different on each ascent.

You probably aren't sure whether you want to take up rock climbing, but you've stumbled upon the sport somewhat by accident.



A rock climber works his way along the face of Gardener's Wall in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. ©Robert Grebe with permission to the MSC

You go to your nearest outdoor store to pick yourself up a sleeping bag or tent, then suddenly find yourself admiring the bright patterns woven into the coils of rope that hang on the walls behind the counter. The shiny collection of cams and stoppers, harnesses with lots of straps and buckles, and those strange looking climbing shoes – you're intrigued! The sight of high mountain peaks and clouds all washed in heavenly light and shadow, has always left you wondering what it would be like to look down from their summits.

Climbing is thick with mystique, and no other sport may be more misconstrued by those outside of it. It is a favored subject for "B" movies and spurious metaphors. A dream about scaling tall rock faces is something a psychiatrist can really sink his teeth into. Climbing is filled with legends of boldness and disaster that make other sports out to be inconsequential games; as an idea, it strikes that chord in the imagination most often associated with sharks, grizzly bears and killer bees.

So now what? Simple: Put your misguided fears aside and take a climbing course from skilled and certified climbing instructors and find out what you have been missing.

As the director of the Arizona Climbing and Adventure School, I know of nothing that boosts self-confidence more than getting one handhold higher than you thought you could. It's direct. It's

concrete. It's the epitome of achievement, and we see it again and again at the school. We help students overcome their fear of heights and issues of trust. Rock climbing's special combination of mental and physical challenges make it a unique experience.

The intrinsic rewards that come from combining concentration, agility, balance, strength and judgment are unequalled in any other sport. Nothing heightens the senses more than the combination of delight and relief that comes from reaching the top of an outdoor rock climbing route.

Over the years our climbing staff and I have instructed and guided clients from all over this country – as well as from around the

For climbers that prefer real rock to rock walls, it's not just about the climb. It's about the amazing desert habitat, stunning views and thrilling challenge of a natural slab. Recreational climbing is another way for you to enjoy your Preserve.

world – at the McDowell Mountains. They are usually surprised by the diversity of the Preserve: its unique flora and fauna, dynamic and vibrant skies and the ever-changing moods of this scenic yet fragile landscape.

The McDowell Mountains contain many hidden jewels awaiting your adventurous spirit. I hope you will take us up on our invitation to experience rock climbing. But be careful, You might just get addicted to life in the vertical world. Don't say we didn't warn you!

## Beginner Climbing Course

Feel the pure excitement and adrenaline rush of your first outdoor rock climb and rappel at the McDowell Mountains!

Once you've tried it, you're hooked. And, if you register now, the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy will receive a donation from the Arizona Climbing and Adventure School of 50% of the cost of a beginner climbing, rappelling, rope traverse and zipline course.



For more information and schedule contact the

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# Living on the Edge: Community Conservation Partnership

By June Cho, MSC Conservation Outreach Specialist

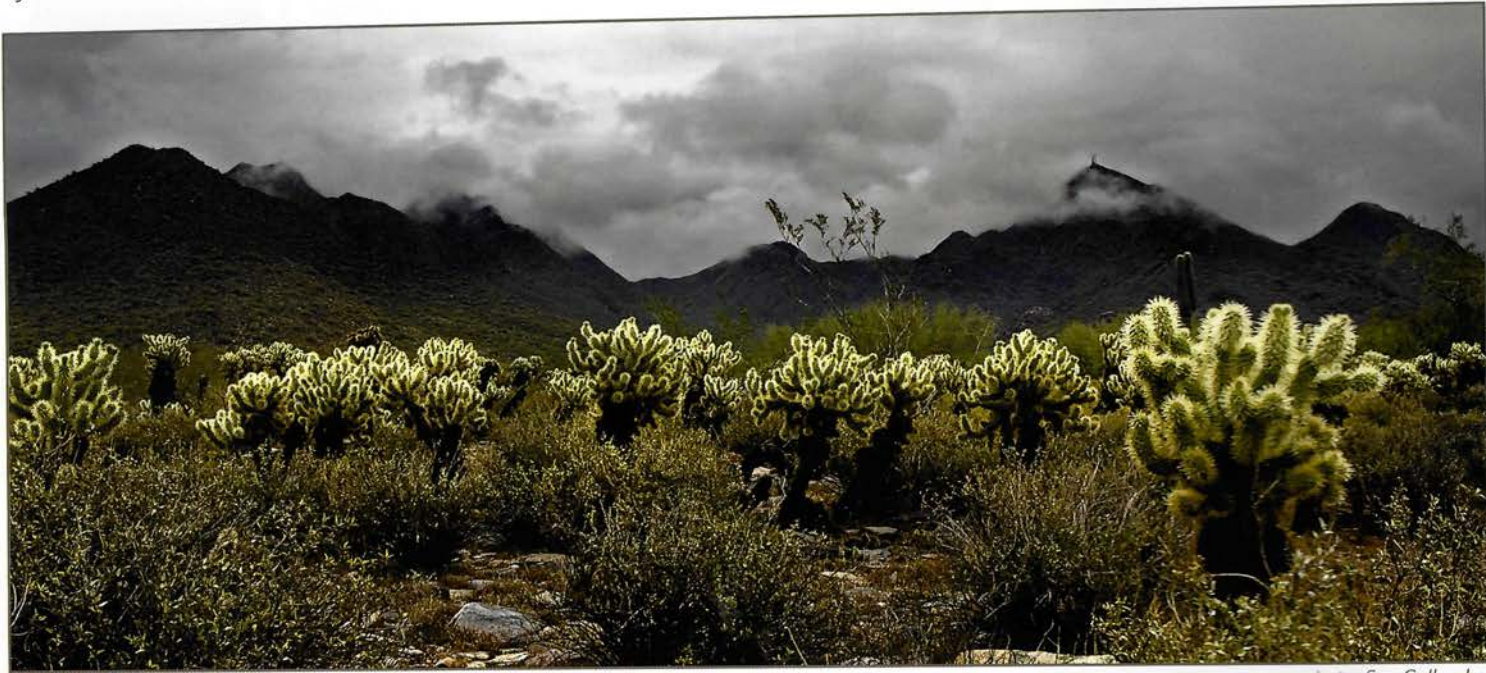


photo: Sue Cullember

*Have you looked to the east and noticed the mountains soaring up from the desert?* These are the McDowell Mountains that are part of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. While the Preserve protects large expanses of the mountains and surrounding desert, there is an area that is equally important – the boundary. This 82 mile-long boundary of the Preserve comprises one of the longest and densest wildland-urban interfaces in the nation. Those of you who live along this boundary are living in a critical and fragile habitat.

Many of us moved close to these mountains because of their beauty, but the Preserve is more than just an attractive open space. It makes up one-third of Scottsdale and is one of the main reasons that the city has been ranked the eighth greenest in the country. The Preserve's open space provides clean air, great places for outdoor recreation, and an economic engine for the Valley's tourism industry, thus enhancing the quality of our life. It is also home to some of the most unusual plants, animals, and microbes in the world.

The Preserve is providing all these benefits, and we are doing much to protect it. However, what about the wildland-urban interface? Unfortunately, this area is showing some wear as more people move closer. The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy (MSC) started the Community Conservation Partnerships project to learn about the ecological problems on the edge of the Preserve. This project has three phases: 1) Identifying edge issues, 2) creating educational messages on potential human impacts for those living on the edge, and 3) engaging them in stewarding the Preserve. Four primary issues have been identified along with educational messages based on these issues.

## IDENTIFIED ISSUES

### Invasive Plants

This is the most common “edge” problem. Most of these plants have been brought to this area by humans – both on purpose for landscaping, such as fountain grass, or by accident as “hitchhikers” in packaging, such as Malta starthistle. They grow very aggressively and compete for the same resources as native plants. These plants often grow in the space between other plants, filling in the desert floor. In a normal desert habitat, the native plants grow further apart, reducing the risk of fire spreading across the habitat—when the plant catches fire, the fire burns that one section and does not spread further. However, when these invasive plants connect other plants, fire can easily spread throughout the region. The invasive plants also dry very quickly, providing fuel for the fire. After a fire, these invasive plants grow and invade the entire region again before the native plants are ready to sprout.



Buffelgrass is a tough non-native plant that can be a serious fire hazard. It has very sturdy roots and tend to crowd out native desert plants.

photo: Jerry Miller, MSPC Chairperson



A Bobcat struts down Mohawk Drive in the DC Ranch area of Scottsdale. ©Don Bierman with permission to the MSC

### Wild Animals and People Living in the Same Space

On the edge of the Preserve, humans and wild animals coexist. Javelina, mule deer, bobcats, and coyotes are “edge” animals, meaning they reside in the wildland-urban interface. They knock over trash cans to find food and eat from pets’ bowls left outdoors at night. As they continuously come down to the residential areas for food, they become too dependent on the humans and lose their abilities to hunt. They can also pick up diseases from domestic animals and bring the diseases into the wild.

People also affect wild animals that do not come down to the residential areas. Some people take wild animals, especially horned lizards and tortoises, out of the Preserve for pets. These animals are rare in the Preserve. They specialize in their habitats and rarely adjust to a new environment. Taking one of these rare species out of the Preserve can make a big change in their population.

### Off-Trail Activities and Impacts

To some, the desert looks like a big empty space with trees and cacti, but it is a complex and fragile system. Much of the desert floor is covered with small plants and a living soil crust made up of a mix of fungi and bacteria that help make the soil more nutritious. This crust keeps the soil moist underneath, providing more water to the plants. It takes hundreds, even thousands of years to build this crust, but it takes one human step to destroy this fragile life. The small plants not only help keep the soil underneath moist, but also create shade, lowering the ground-level temperature. When people or their pets decide not to stay on the trail, and crush the fragile crust and trample the plants, they expose more ground surface to the sun. This increases the ground-level temperature, dries the soil, and eventually leads to weaker soil composition and soil erosion.

### Littering and Trash Dumping

Every part of the desert is habitat for wildlife. Unfortunately, sometimes people see this open space as the perfect dump. We have found car wreckage, furniture, refrigerators, construction waste, used motor oil and more, especially in the washes. Wild animals are afraid of these unfamiliar objects and change their behaviors to avoid them, pushing animals farther away and shrinking their habitat. The trash also often contains toxic materials and chemicals that can seep into the soil, killing plants or poisoning animals.

### MESSAGES

The following messages have been created based on survey results about these issues from both stewards and local residents:

- 1) You Matter – The decisions you make for your landscape, your neighborhood, the roadside in your community and in the Preserve affect the health of the Preserve. Stewardship starts with you – learn about native plants and support desert-friendly landscaping.
- 2) You Matter - Wild animals are healthiest and happiest when living in their own habitats and eating their natural foods. Feeding or collecting them doesn’t help – it hurts. Stewardship starts with you – don’t leave trash cans or pet food out overnight and help animals stay wild.
- 3) You Matter - Your adventurous trip off the trail can cost years of desert history. Staying on the trail keeps you and the desert’s wildlife safe. Stewardship starts with you – use the trail, be a welcomed guest, and leave no trash behind you.
- 4) You Matter – It may be easier to dump trash in the Preserve than to take it to the dumpster, but easier isn’t always better. Stewardship starts with you – take a trip to a dumpster or a trash can with your trash and keep the Preserve clean.

### ENGAGING RESIDENTS OF THE WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE IN STEWARDSHIP

This next phase hasn’t begun. Our goal will be to foster a sense of stewardship in those who reside in this fragile habitat. To do this, we want to create Community Conservation Partnerships with different community groups such as homeowners associations, clubs, and other formal groups. Through activities with these groups, we will share our messages, inviting communities to understand what it means to be so close to this treasure and the responsibilities that go along with it.

You can make a difference in the Preserve with small easy steps.

The Preserve is not somebody’s. It is yours - and you matter to it. Stewardship starts with you. Now.

I am on edge waiting to see if there will be a good wildflower season this year. What do you expect?

Regina, Phoenix

Some authorities say that we need to have soaking rain in October in order to have a good wildflower season the following spring. Others say it's November and yet others insist it is December. And in addition to the timing of the first fall rains, supposedly it is vital to have rain at least once a month after that until spring. We know that wildflowers germinate in the late fall, grow slowly and stealthily over the winter, and then bloom in the early spring. We also know that in general the more total rain there is during fall and winter the better the wildflower season is. But beyond that nobody really knows what makes some years great and others sparse.

So what about spring 2010? Well, we've had soaking rains, although they were later this year than in past years, and they may produce some blooms. Something very reassuring is that some annuals and perennials bloom almost every spring regardless of how much it has rained and when. These "reliables" include perennial shrubs like fairy duster, brittlebush, ocotillo, globe mallow, and chuparosa as well as true wildflowers like scorpionweed, fiddleneck, desert marigold, blue dicks, lupine, desert chicory, various daisies, and even the much-admired poppy. In a poor year these may be sparse, but there are always some visible near the trails and on the hillsides of the Preserve.

Most wildflowers are annuals – meaning they only live for one season. This lifestyle has advantages and disadvantages. A BIG advantage is that these plants don't need to grow things that would help them survive our hot, dry summers like fat stems to store water or special leaf coatings to keep water from evaporating. A BIG disadvantage is that they absolutely must create seeds, or baby plants, to carry on the species the next year. The way plants make seeds is with flowers. So, annuals produce A LOT of flowers in order to guarantee that enough seeds are produced to allow the species to survive. This lifestyle could be thought of as living on the edge!



### *Flora Photo ID to the McDowell Sonoran Preserve*



If you would like to identify flowers around the Preserve this spring, this is the best wildflower identification guide around AND it is focused entirely on the Preserve. Author and photographer Marianne Jensen made an easy to use guide, coded by color and small enough to fit inside a small pack! Purchase your copy today through our online shop or by coming to the MSC office.

### *Wildflower Watch...*

*MSC's annual Wildflower Watch connects you with current information about the wildflowers blooming in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. Visit the link on the front page of the MSC website often as information will be posted as soon as it is verified. This is the only resource in the Valley to provide weekly updated wildflower reports for easy to access, local trails.*

# Focus on Conservation Photography

By Brenton Woodward, MSC Steward and Foothills Academy Senior

MSC's next Photography Contest will serve as a bridge between the ageless appreciation of nature and the cutting-edge creativity of modern photography. The raw vitality of the Preserve is the perfect subject for the photographer with an appreciation for the beauty of the Sonoran Desert, whether they are a die-hard or a dabbler.

The 2010 Photography Contest has three divisions: youth, amateur and advanced. It also has a wide range of categories for submissions, affording an opportunity for every interest to be explored and expressed. These categories are: Seasons, Digital Art, Macro, Plants & Animals, People, and Landscapes & Geology. Of these, the new Digital Art category is possibly the broadest and most flexible.

As it pertains to this Contest, Digital Art is defined as photography which utilizes methods such as monochrome, time-lapse, composite, tone mapping/HDR, infrared, ultraviolet, or other digital altering or retouching. Photography and digital image manipulation increasingly go hand-in-hand, and those who are interested or proficient in both will find no lack of inspiration in the Preserve. The subject of a Digital Art submission can be anything as long as it meets the category criteria; this gives contestants entering the Digital Art category an enormous amount of creative control over all as-

pects of their submissions. To ensure that the photo fits the contest guidelines, an unaltered version of the image must also be submitted with all Digital Art entries.

In addition to the new Digital Art, Seasons, and Macro categories, this year's Photography Contest is emphasizing youth participation; we are giving a \$600 Novara mountain bike courtesy of REI to the "Best of Show" in the youth division. Youth can also vie for the \$500 prize for overall "Best in Show."

Participating in the Photography Contest is not only the perfect opportunity for young photographers to practice their craft, it also makes an excellent addition to a college or scholarship application. There is no cost to enter, and there are many opportunities for recognition and exposure.

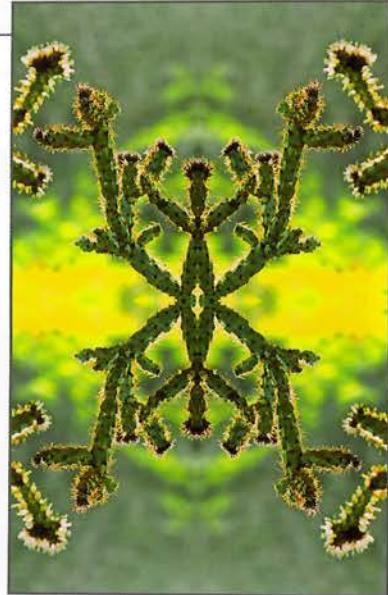


photo: Barry White

Photographs must be taken between June 1, 2009 to May 30, 2010. Completed entries must be received by 5 p.m. on May 30, 2010. Winners will be notified via email by June 30, 2010. Photographs must be taken in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve or in the area yet to be acquired within the Preserve boundary. Photographers must follow the Preserve

Ordinance including staying on designated trails, not disturbing plants, animals, or archeological sites, and visiting within sunrise and sunset. Photos that obviously necessitated breaking the Ordinance will be disqualified. More information on the Photography Contest, the Preserve Ordinance and map can be found on the MSC website.

## 2010 FOCUS ON CONSERVATION ENTRY FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

I have read the entry guidelines and hereby attest that my entry meets the criteria and I agree to contest guidelines.

Sign \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Complete this entry form and attach a copy to each submission.

1) Indicate a category for your entry (select only one)

- Plants and/or Animals       Digital Art       People  
 Landscapes and/or Geology       Macro       Seasons

2) Indicate a division for your entry (select only one)

- Youth (under 18)       Amateur       Advanced

3) Descriptive title\*

\* If no title provided, "Untitled" will be assigned.

4) Approximate location photograph was taken

Generous support for this program is provided by:

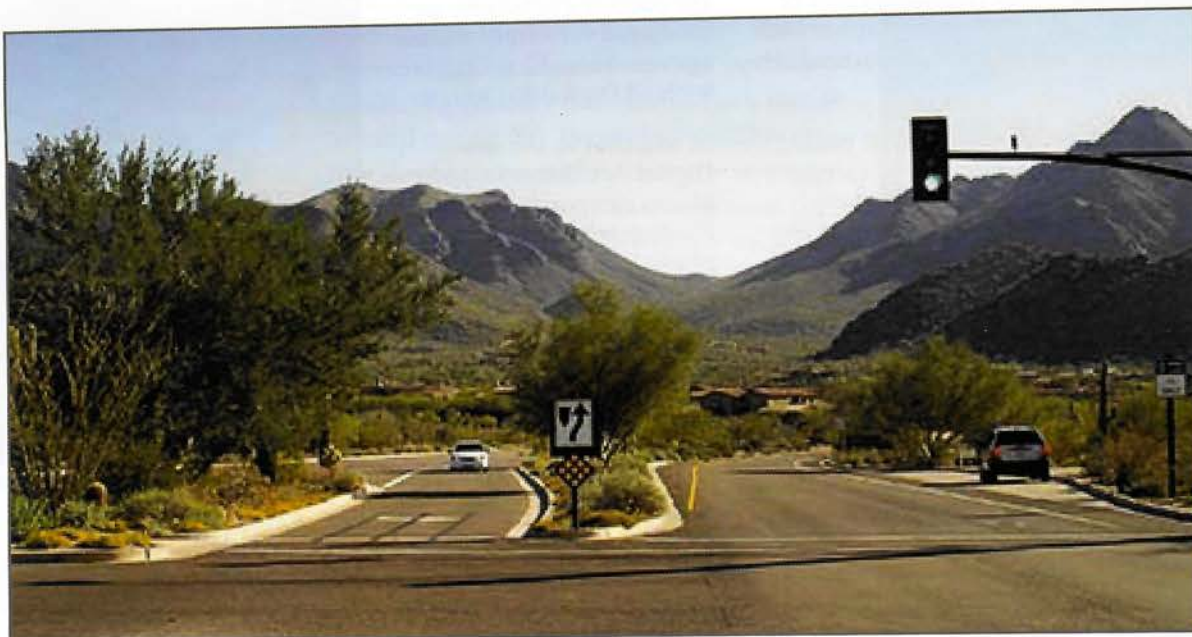


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# Designing an Edge Community: DC Ranch

Barb Pringle, MSC Steward and McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission Promotions Committee member



Thompson Peak Parkway's well planted roadway curves gracefully along the east edge of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve from its intersection with Desert Ridge Road. ©Don Bierman with permission to the MSC

The American West is more than a geographic region. It stands also as an iconic representation of our hardy American spirit of exploration. Yet sadly, that iconic American West is threatened today, as it is swallowed up by thoughtless growth and development. Over the next 25 years, estimates are that the U.S. will grow by another 50 million residents. The American West is expected to absorb a large share of that growth, says the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, perhaps increasing by as much as 25 million people.

As the population grows and more people move beyond conventional city limits seeking a little privacy and space, development naturally follows. This phenomenon is what creates the wildland-urban interface. While there is no way to stop growth in a young and vibrant region like Phoenix, there are ways to develop the land with greater sensitivity to remaining open space. Communities are increasingly looking to smart growth techniques as they expand at the edge of urban areas. The essentials of smart growth, notes the Lincoln Institute, are the following:

- Integrated, accessible, natural open space
- Mixed public, commercial, and residential uses
- Pedestrian orientation and other mobility options
- A range of housing densities and prices

DC Ranch was created in north Scottsdale 12 years ago in a largely undeveloped area. Located adjacent to the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, it is one community the Lincoln Institute points to as an example of smart growth at the wildland-urban interface. In fact, approximately 4500 acres of DC Ranch's total acreage was incorporated into the Preserve.

To learn more about how this community was conceived and developed, we spoke to one of its primary architects, Dale Gardon of Dale Gardon Design. With offices located within DC Ranch's Market Street Studio, the firm is proud of its history as the author and document creator of Design Guidelines for DC Ranch and Silverleaf communities. Dale worked with DMB Associates, Inc. (DMB), an Arizona-based, diversified real estate company on the development of the communities.

## How did you decide what kind of community DC Ranch should be?

This was DMB's first Master Planned Community and they challenged us to create the "*Finest Master Planned Community of its time*" in the beginning of concepting DC Ranch. After analyzing all that had gone on before here locally, we had to imagine how we could affect planning a community in a much more positive way than some of the adjacent communities that were considered the 'best' at that time. It was a group effort in conjunction with DMB also visiting what were considered the best communities nationally. We wanted to demonstrate a new way of community planning and building that allowed for significant natural desert preservation, but also create the potential for a 'Live, Work, Play' community.

## What were the primary goals in developing the architectural vision?

The architecture was based on diversity and promoting regionally relevant architectural styles. At the time, all the Master Planned communities were based on a design platform of sameness and homogeneity of all the homes, on the assumption that was best for property value protection. I wanted to prove that diversity of the home styles and configurations would not only protect values, but actually enhance values.



How paramount was the knowledge that this area was once a working ranch and now a huge piece of land next to the McDowell Sonoran Preserve in developing your design priorities?

It was a tremendous asset that this property had so much history as it gave us an instant foundation to build upon. No other community has celebrated the western ranching heritage as much as DC Ranch did in designing and implementing the early elements, such as the custom street lights, fencing, trail stops, transit shelters, signage, etc, that were built before any home existed. The fact that this property was adjacent to the McDowell Sonoran Preserve was an obvious asset as well, and it became the design focus on how to expand the Preserve to benefit desert preservation as well as enhance the community with a network of open space linkages.

How did the native flora and fauna and the open north Scottsdale location impact your design?

Huge efforts were put forth in creating expansive nurseries to house far more than what was required for preservation of the natural desert plants. In addition, we studied wildlife migration and preserved many of those corridors, and we documented all the natural drainage patterns and preserved the most significant washes throughout the community.

What was the hardest part of developing DC Ranch?

The hardest part was conceiving of design elements that would make the community better, but at the time didn't necessarily meet the rule books. Therefore we needed to negotiate around some of the "rules" that at the time they were written didn't contemplate what we wanted to do. For example, we designed Thompson Peak Parkway to move vertically and horizontally with the natural terrain and to respect the natural desert by creating oversized medians and a curving layout. That idea didn't easily comply with the City Standards at the time. Contrast that unique non-standard design approach with how uniform Bell Road east of Pima/101 is (which met the current standards), as it ran perfectly straight into the mountain. Two different design solutions for the same basic need, but one is more environmentally responsible and aesthetically pleasing.

The easiest part?

We had no trouble from the start getting support from DMB to do what was right, but we often ran up against opposition from others for what was then considered "standard industry practice." As a client, DMB understood what it took to do something extraordinary and wasn't afraid to take the time or effort to evaluate what was best for the land, which often wasn't the most obvious solution.

Critics of DC Ranch point to the scars on the McDowell Mountains left by the Silverleaf roads and to the presence of a golf course, which some claim should never be part of a smart and sustainable community. What do you say to these folks?

The Urban Land Institute's ten low-tech smart edge urbanism ideas:

- Regional governance
- Mimic natural hydrological systems
- Identify "no growth" areas by maintaining strong urban edges
- Preserve connected wildlife habitat
- Establish minimum residential densities and required mix of housing types
- Pedestrian oriented, automobile tamed high intensity centers
- Complete and connected streets
- Irresistible bicycling and pedestrian systems
- Historic preservation
- Sustainable community development codes for the 21st century

My view is that DC Ranch and Silverleaf are exemplary communities in terms of integrating and balancing development and preservation. For example, native stone was cultivated for years and kept on site to reuse for site walls and architecture within the community – before anyone was really discussing sustainable practices in community design. To my knowledge, there is not one other community locally that has devoted more time, money and energy to desert preservation. The total community was 8,000 acres when I started to design DC Ranch and at that time, only 800 acres (10% of the total land area) was required to be preserved. Through cooperation and tremendous insight on the part of many, those 800 acres of required preservation expanded to well over 4,000 acres, now a part of the Preserve.

As to golf courses, they provide a different type of open space and recreation and they provide corridors for wildlife, often connecting under arterial roads that otherwise could easily segregate areas. In my view, a real testament to a community is whether it gets better or worse over time. I personally believe that DC Ranch and Silverleaf are getting better with time as a thriving, caring, and aesthetically pleasing community with exceptional landscape and architecture. As we move forward over the next decade, all development locally, nationally, and internationally have a responsibility to do a better job in thinking more holistically about ways to develop 'smarter, sustainable, environmentally-conscious' communities.

References:

Lincoln Institute of Land Policy/Sonoran Institute. Growing Smarter at the Edge.

Dale Gardon Design, 20885 North 90th Place, Scottsdale, AZ. 85255. 480-948-9666. [www.dalegardondesign.com](http://www.dalegardondesign.com)

Urban Land Institute. From Low Tech to High Tech: Environmental Solutions. A new vision for Edge Development in the West. ULI Innovations Workshop, Scottsdale, AZ. September 2008.

# Family Fun Page

Hi Kids! This issue of the Mountain Lines is about **LIVING ON THE EDGE** of the Preserve. Let's find out what scientists call a habitat that is "on the edge!"



The edge of the Preserve is a special type of habitat called a wildland-urban interface. An **interface** is a place where things come together. This special habitat is like your skin. Your skin is the **interface** between the inside of your body and the outside world. The fence around your yard is also an **interface** - between your yard and your neighbors.

The Preserve's interface is called a wildland-urban interface because it is **wildland**, a place where wild plants and animals live that connects to a place where many people live, which is called **urban**. Because the Preserve's wildland-urban interface is one of the longest (about 80 miles) and most populated (almost 250,000 people) in the nation, scientists study it to learn how people and wildlife can live together without hurting each other.

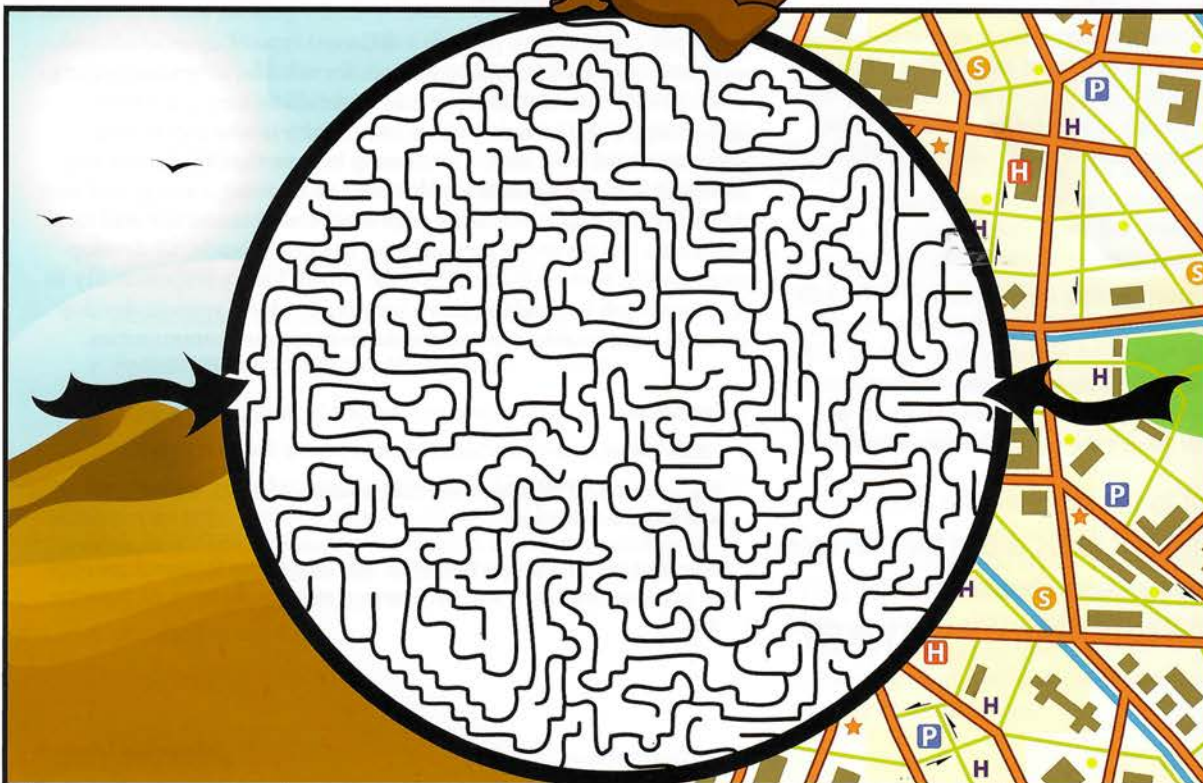
## Dinner Discussion\*

- Can you think of 3 other things that are interfaces?
- Why do you think interfaces are important?
- How could an interface be hurt?
- What kinds of things might scientists be studying in the Preserve's wildland-urban interface?
- What can you do to keep the Preserve's wildland-urban interface safe?

\* Dear adults, Reading the articles in this issue of the Mountain Lines will help you answer these questions. There are no wrong answers to these questions - only possibilities. And remember, encouraging kids to think creatively and stretch beyond their first thoughts helps build the critical thinking skills needed in science!



Can you find your way across this wildland-urban interface?



## Try this Word Morph Challenge

Turn the word CITY into the word WILD by changing one letter at a time. The starting word is on the line below it. Repeat the process until you spell the ending word. To help, the letter that is different from the word above it is circled. Good Luck!

C I T Y

— — — (E)  
— — —  
— — —  
— — —  
— — —

W I L D

There are many paths you can create to change CITY to WILD. Can you make another path with less than 10 steps? How about less than six steps?

# An "Edge" Specialist *Ruthie Carll, MSC Executive Director*

I have been teaching science, mostly desert ecology, for 18 years. During that time, I have used activities that not only teach scientific facts, but also promote reflection on values regarding the natural world. One of the most successful activities has been "Pick Me." During this activity, students (children or adults) are presented with photographs of fifteen desert animals including birds, insects, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and fish. In small groups they discuss and agree upon their favorite and least favorite animals. Next, groups discuss why they selected each animal. Lastly, they write a resume for their least favorite animal. The resumes have to convince the employer that the animal would be a great addition and must include factual information. During the process of researching the animals to write the resume, the group discovers that the animal that they thought was unlikeable is actually quite interesting!



photo: M Wallace

Because this issue of the Mountain Lines is themed *Living on the Edge*, I wanted to focus on an animal that specializes in the narrow, fragile habitat called

the wildland-urban interface that forms the border of the Preserve. Recalling the results of the activity described above, I chose the misunderstood and much maligned javelina and use the reasons often given for identifying the javelina as a "least favorite" as a way to share the javelina's true, interesting story.

## Myth or Fact: Javelinas travel in packs.

**Fact.** Javelinas spend their lives living with their families in a group called a herd. While "herd" sounds like a lot of individuals, there are usually less than 10 members. The herd will have a home range of up to about 700 acres and, because they are large for a desert animal, their presence is easily detected by trails, bedding wallows, plants that have been grazed, or just by seeing them.

## Myth or Fact: Javelinas are aggressive.

**Myth.** Javelinas have extremely poor eyesight. This is probably the reason they spend their lives living in a herd. A solitary javelina would be easy prey for even a smaller predator like a coyote. When startled - which is fairly easy as they can rarely see something approaching - they use the same safety strategy as will a covey of quail - to scatter. The reputation for "charging" comes from the fact that, if they don't see the source of their fright, they may actually run towards it. People interpret this as a threat when, in reality, the javelina is just confused and probably more frightened than the person! What about those scary tusks? They are for digging up roots. Javelinas are vegetarians, using their tusks primarily for defense rather than aggression.

There is an interesting difference between the selections of children and adults. Children's "favorites" could be anything from a rattlesnake, coyote, or javelina, to a tarantula. They have a hard time, however, picking a least favorite animal, often settling on a fish, perhaps because our local children have little experience with fish so they seem strange. I believe their difficulty selecting a least favorite is due to their lack of "learned biases." The adults' selections are exactly the opposite. They struggle to identify a favorite, rarely straying from the innocuous quail or cottontail rabbit, and have an easy time coming up with least favorites, most often settling on javelina, even over rattlesnakes and insects! This is interesting as in a more geographically widespread demographic, mammals are rarely identified as "unlikeable" as opposed to spiders or scorpions. Upon questioning, the adults state that they "hate" javelina for many reasons - many of which are based on myths or misunderstood interactions.

## Myth or Fact: Javelinas Stink.

**Fact.** This is also because of their poor eyesight. How might you differentiate a member of your family from a stranger if you couldn't see them? Perhaps by their smell. If you lived with 10 or more other family members, however, you would have to memorize a lot of smells. When a stranger intruded, you might not be able to quickly identify them if you were running through a list of smells in your head! To make things easier for the javelina, all members of the herd rub themselves on each other regularly, creating an easily recognizable "herd smell," making an invader much easier to detect.

## Myth or Fact: Javelinas are Destructive.

This is a matter of perspective. Do javelinas dig up your landscape and eat it? Yes. However, this is just as destructive as you are to the field of wheat harvested to make your pasta dinner. You just don't see the harvested farm at the supermarket. Do javelinas knock over your garbage can for a snack? Yup. This is probably less destructive than blading a swath of desert and building that supermarket on it. Just put your trash can out on collection morning instead of the night before and keep the temptation of an easy meal away from the javelina.

## Myth or Fact: Javelinas Live Here Because They Can Scavenge in the Neighborhood.

**Myth.** You actually moved into their neighborhood and frankly did a wee bit more damage to it than they are doing now. They live at the base of the mountains on slopes, called bajadas, because there are more plants there than on the mountain tops or desert floor. Because javelinas are large and live in herds, they have to live where there is enough food. People also like to live on the bajada because there is a view and there are more plants making the area pretty. Please share!

## Myth or Fact: Wild Boars are Dangerous.

**Fact.** But boars are pigs and javelinas are not. Javelinas are peccaries, a docile, nearly blind, easily spooked, family-loving, interesting animal.

I hope that the information here will cause you to think twice before picking javelina as a 'least favorite' in the future!

## Taking it to the edge: Safe Enjoyment of the Preserve

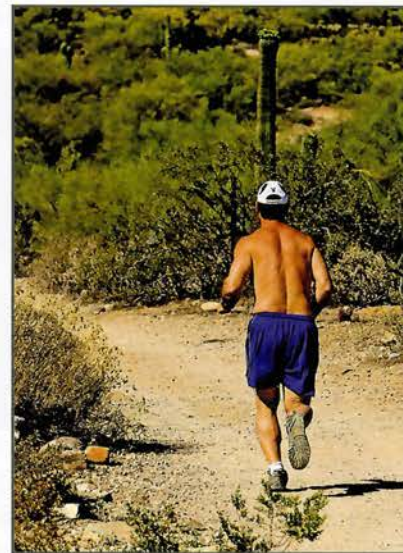
Barb Pringle, MSC Steward and McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission Promotions Committee member

We all appreciate the fact that the McDowell Sonoran Preserve offers an abundance of beautiful trails suitable for a variety of recreational activities, including hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking and trail running. With the increase in trail users and the opening of some of the more rugged trails such as Tom's Thumb, there are more risk-taking opportunities than ever before. So, let's review trail etiquette and safety rules for two groups of users who like to live life on the edge: mountain bikers and trail runners.

- Yield right-of-way to horses and hikers
- Educate other cyclists regarding directions on the trail
- Educate motorcycle riders that it is illegal to ride on land in the Preserve
- Slow down at blind curves
- Watch for hikers on steep switchbacks



photo: M Wallace



### Trail runners

A longtime user of the Preserve was run into by an out-of-control trail runner while hiking the Pinnacle Peak Park (not part of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, but used by many of the same people.) He was OK, but understandably shaken. John Loleit, Pinnacle Peak Park Coordinator, agrees that trail runners can be so focused that, at times, they can be unaware of other trail users. He says they tend to concentrate their vision about 15 to 20 feet in front of them and so they come upon hikers quickly, startling both parties. Further, many runners are so concerned about "their time" that they have little regard for their or other hiker's safety. When Loleit receives complaints, park staff and volunteers greet runners on the trail or at the trailhead and remind them of proper trail etiquette. He says runners respond well.

He notes too, that it's important for hikers to remember that they are not the only ones on the trail. "Sometimes hikers walk side by side, carrying on a conversation and are clueless that someone is approaching them or coming up behind them. And one interesting fact...many people do not know their right from their left! This frustrates runners, who approach from behind and yell 'runner on your left,' only to have the hiker move to the left!"

### Mountain bikers

Tom's Thumb seems to be a real draw for some of the Preserve's more challenge-seeking bikers. One rider shares his experiences on a blog complete with helmet cam video. He commented in one posting, "East End is a roller coaster down from the Thumb. Tight, steep, loose and did I say steep? I took helmet cam all the way down. It was downright scary in spots...will I do it again?? Heck ya. I haven't had a thrill like that in a long while." While we're happy this rider made it down without hurting himself or others, he might not be so lucky next time.

Mike Milillo, MSC mountain bike patrol chair, says that he does not ride the steeper trails and would recommend the same to other riders. He defines steeper trails as Tom's Thumb trail, East End Trail, east side Sunrise trail and upper parts of west side Sunrise trail. Milillo and his fellow patrollers follow a few common-sense rules on the trail:

## We CAN all just get along

“Certainly, we always want everyone to have a safe and enjoyable experience in the Preserve – and a little bit of good planning and common sense will go a long way! None of us want to see ourselves or our friends on the evening news headlines!” says Claire Miller, Scottsdale’s Preserve Manager. Her rules for all trail users include these tips:

- Whatever your activity of choice, be well prepared – from personal protective gear, hydration, snacks, communication needs (cell phone), to back up gear – especially for mountain bikers.
- It's always best to hike or ride with a buddy or a small group. If someone gets injured, there is always someone who can summon assistance. Even better is if you have a third person who can stay with the injured party.
- Try to make yourself knowledgeable about the trail and conditions of the trail you will be on, as some of our trails can be challenging. Some we sign as “not recommended for horses or bikes.” Pay attention to those signs! Even if you choose to take one of those trails and you are on a bike or a horse, remember they can be steep, with many switchbacks. While you might be able to negotiate the trails, remember that others may also be on the trails. Short, steep switchbacks don't allow much room for evasive action. Trail courtesy rules must still be followed.
- It doesn't hurt to take the free trail maps along with you and to watch for emergency marker signs along the way. Even if you forget the exact number of the last emergency marker sign that you passed, if you have a map and a general idea of the trail segment that you are on, you can communicate that to emergency dispatchers, if needed.

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Whenever the pressure of our complex city life thins my blood and numbs my brain, I seek relief in the trail; and when I hear the coyote wailing to the yellow dawn, my cares fall from me — I am happy.

*-Hamlin Garland*



# McDowell Sonoran Society

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

McDowell Sonoran Society members are community leaders and conservation advocates. They support ecologically sustainable public policies and care for the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. They come together at special events and activities to enjoy the natural world and learn about the diverse plants and animals of the Sonoran Desert.

The dedication of McDowell Sonoran Society members enables the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy to protect our area's open spaces, provide educational programs for people of all ages and advance the conservation agenda.

McDowell Sonoran Society members have the opportunity to learn more about conservation through private hikes, trips to interesting areas and lectures by experts.

Upcoming McDowell Sonoran Society events:

March 13: Recognition Event at the Gateway to the McDowell Sonoran Preserve: Join MSC Stewards at the Gateway to the McDowell Sonoran Preserve for a morning of activities. A short hike finding treasures of the desert, a special look at the Bajada Nature Trail, and short talks on wildflowers and photography will provide a new perspective on all that MSC is doing to protect the Preserve.

May 15: Zane Grey Ranch Star Party  
Join us on a special trip to cooler country and a behind the scenes look at the historic site of Zane Grey's cabin just below the Mogollon Rim outside of Payson. The Morrisons and Gulicks are opening their home for Society members, and will share their expertise on this Arizona icon. Top off the evening with star gazing and spend the next morning on a special hike, for a weekend you will never forget!

Please join the McDowell Sonoran Society. Through your leadership support you will play a vital role in the future of the Preserve and the lives of our children and grandchildren. For more information on the McDowell Sonoran Society or upcoming events, please call Linda Raish at 480-998-7971, extension 101 or email [linda@mcdowellsonoran.org](mailto:linda@mcdowellsonoran.org). This FREE family program is perfect for everyone. The series provides hands-on learning opportunities for kids and their parents, and focuses on the native wildlife and geology of the McDowell Mountains and surrounding Sonoran Desert. The spectacular setting and exciting programs are the perfect way to end a busy week.

## We gratefully acknowledge our McDowell Sonoran Society Members!

(Gifts and pledges received January 1, 2009-December 31, 2009, Founding Members and Lifetime Members)

Anonymous (2)  
Robert and Susan Alpert  
Don Basta  
Phillip Bell  
Brad and Lisa Berry  
Lyle and Nancy Campbell  
Ruthie and Philip Carl  
Ellen and Denny Carr  
John and Peggy Chamberlain  
Pete and Diana Chasar  
Richard and Gloria Cochran  
Anne Collins  
TJ Connors  
Bill Cope  
Cay Cowie  
Leslie Dashew and Jack Salisbury  
Florence and Walter Dean  
Alice and John Demetra  
Carol and Mike Dillon  
Daniel Dixon  
Jeffrey and Debra Doss  
Mike and Kathy Dougherty  
Sandy and Dana Draus  
Drinkwater Family  
Jackie Drinkwater  
Jamie Buchanan Drinkwater  
Con and Joy Englehorn  
Richard and Ann Funk  
Marilyn Geninatti  
Stephanie and Alan Giese  
Daniel and Elaine Gruber  
Melinda and John Gulick  
Stephen and Eleanor Hammerman  
Thomas and Judith Headley  
Steve Jones  
Ralph and Nancy Knight  
Virginia Korte

Christine and Rick Kovach  
David and Linda Lange  
Mark and Katie Leinweber  
Sue Livingston  
Dave Lueth  
Janis and Dennis Lyon  
Paul and Sharon Madson  
Leonard and Lindy Marcisz  
Sandra and John McCullough  
Jazmyn McDonald  
Claire Miller  
A. Wali and Jackie Naibi  
Florence and Jerry Nelson  
Fred Padgett  
Craig and Tammy Palmer  
Harry and Rose Papp  
Art Pearce  
Robert Pope  
Linda and Randy Raish  
Jane Rau  
Dick and Connie Rosler  
Jackie Ross  
Arnold Roy  
David, Rita and Wendy Ryan  
Doreen Saferstein  
Carol and Randy Schilling  
BJ Shortridge  
Oliver and Aimee Smith  
Edward Smock  
Greg Stipek  
Vernon and Cille Swaback  
Betty Tatro  
Gregg Tryhus  
H.B. and Jocelyn Wallace  
Thomas and Laurel Walsh  
Connie and Craig Weatherup  
Allan and Diana Winston

## Join Our Circle of Friends

As a community member who values the outdoors, and specifically the Sonoran Desert, you understand the importance of preserving and maintaining open space now to ensure its availability in the future. This shared appreciation of the desert is why we are inviting you to join us today as a Friend of the Preserve... either through our website at [www.mcdowellsonoran.org](http://www.mcdowellsonoran.org) or by returning the membership form below.

# Yes!

I want to help preserve my desert and mountains by joining MSC's Circle of Friends.

- McDowell Sonoran Society (\$1,500+)
- Steward Circle (\$1,000)       Trailbuilder Circle (\$500)       Caretaker Circle (\$250)
- Pathfinder Circle (\$100)       Hiker Circle (\$50)       Other \_\_\_\_\_

- Please charge my credit card       A check is enclosed

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name as it appears on the card \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) by which you would like to be acknowledged \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

- I would prefer that my gift remain anonymous

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



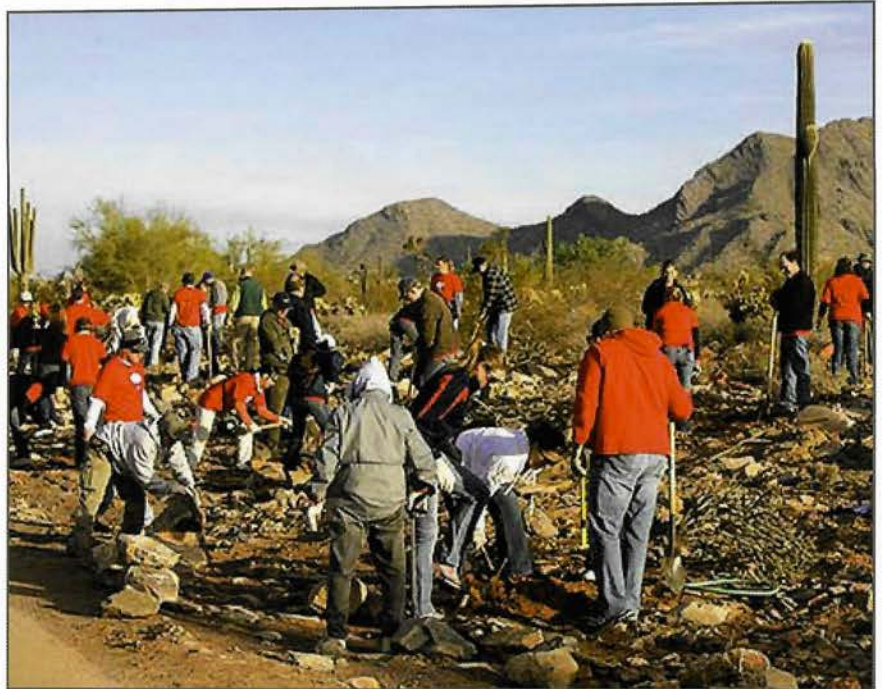
## Henkel Consumer Goods Inc.

Henkel Consumer Goods Inc. has been MSC's partner since 1995, supporting the inaugural Mountain Ball Gala event aimed at preserving the McDowell Mountains and surrounding desert.

You may not have heard of the name Henkel, but you probably know their products. Henkel markets well-known brands such as Dial® soaps, Purex® laundry detergents, Renuzit® air fresheners, and Right Guard® antiperspirants. Henkel, a global Fortune 500 company, is based in Düsseldorf, Germany and purchased The Dial Corporation in 2004. Since then, The Dial Corporation has transitioned to Henkel Consumer Goods Inc. Henkel products have been in the marketplace for more than 130 years. This exciting partnership enables Henkel to reach new customers across the world and continue developing innovative new products.

In December 2008, when Henkel moved to their new headquarters located on Scottsdale Rd. and the Loop 101, employees were given the day to volunteer with non-profit organizations across the Valley. MSC was a beneficiary of this contributed service, welcoming almost eighty employee volunteers into the Preserve to work on the then yet to be started Bajada Nature Trail. After only three hours of intense efforts by these enthusiastic volunteers, the trail was completely roughed in and four piles of boulders had been created. These boulders were subsequently used to create the bench seating found on the trail. Henkel proudly sponsored the cost of creating one of these benches.

On December 11, 2009, Henkel employees took part in a second company Community Service Day, and 100 employees again volunteered at the Gateway, this time to replant native plants along Thompson Peak Parkway. Based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics



Employees from Henkel Consumer Goods work with stewards from the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy and the City of Scottsdale preserve manager planting cactus along Thompson Peak Parkway at the Gateway entrance to the Preserve.  
©Provided by Henkel Consumer Products

value of volunteer time at \$20.24 per hour, contributed service through these two projects is more than \$16,000!

MSC is proud of the support we receive from the corporate community and recognizes this support through the Preservation Partners program. For more information about becoming a Preservation Partner, please contact Linda Raish, MSC Community Development Director at 480-998-7971 extension 101 or via email at [linda@mcdowellsonoran.org](mailto:linda@mcdowellsonoran.org).

"I am I plus my surroundings and if I do not preserve the latter I do not preserve myself."

- Spanish philosopher Jose Ortega y Gasset (1883 - 1955)

### Mountain Lines Contributing Photographers:

M. Wallace	Sue Cullember
Don Bierman	Jerry Miller
Robert Grebe	James Hamilton
Mark Gottlieb	Stephen Parsons

## Become a friend of MSC

**Thank you for your support!**

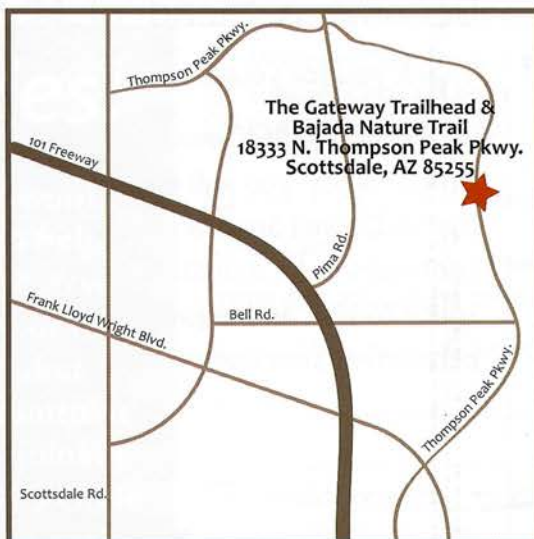
By joining the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy, you will ensure that the McDowell Sonoran Preserve continues to be a pristine open space to visit and enjoy, as well as a permanent sanctuary for wildlife.

## Join us on Fridays in April for the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy Family Friday Sunset Series

This FREE family program is perfect for everyone. The series provides hands-on learning opportunities for kids and their parents, and focuses on the native wildlife and geology of the McDowell Mountains and surrounding Sonoran Desert. The spectacular setting and exciting programs are the perfect way to end a busy week.

### WHERE:

Gateway Access Area Amphitheater  
18333 N. Thompson Peak Parkway  
(between Bell and Legacy Blvd. – formerly Union Hills)



### WHEN:

Friday, April 9th, 4:30 PM: Have Rocks – Will Travel

Liz Anderson of the Arizona Mining and Mineral Museum will share some surprising uses of rocks and minerals, and talk about what you might find in the Preserve. She'll have a traveling mini-museum with her and lots of pass-arounds.

Friday, April 16th, 4:30 PM: Nighttime Wings

Come and see owls that live right here in our parks and neighborhoods. Have you ever wondered how owls sneak up on prey without being heard? Did you know there are several kinds of owls living here? Would you like to see owls up close and learn how they survive in the desert? Liberty Wildlife will answer these questions and more with the help of their owl ambassadors.

Friday, April 23rd, 4:30 PM: All About Saguaros  
Alice Demetra, MSC Steward

Learn intriguing and fun facts about the plant that most often comes to mind when you think of Arizona. Discover how you measure up on the kids vs. cactus growth chart. See, smell and touch the insides of saguaro fruit. Taste saguaro syrup. Plant saguaro seeds and take home your very own grow-a-saguaro project.

Friday, April 30th, 4:30 PM: Explore the Bajada Nature Trail

A hike through this 1/2 mile interpretation trail at the Gateway with its creator, MSC Executive Director Ruthie Carll, is sure to be fun and informative.

Check out the calendar of events on our website for more activities  
[http://www.mcdowellsonoran.org/events\\_activities.html](http://www.mcdowellsonoran.org/events_activities.html)