



# The Preserver

December 2012

*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.*

## Welcome Class 34

See a photo of the latest class to complete New Steward Orientation.

Page 2

## Volunteer Support Report

Steward Raejean Fellows explains how this program is addressing steward retention issues.

Page 3

## Community Relations Report

Master Steward and Program Chair Barb Pringle provides an update.

Page 4

## Report! Report! Report!

Master Steward and Patrol Chair Bobby Alpert reminds us about reporting hours.

Page 5

## MSC Rock Stars Roll into 2013

Steward Ralph Aufheimer is looking for cyclists to join the MSC Rock Stars.

Page 6

## Meet a Steward

Read about Steward Marsha Lipps' many volunteer contributions to the Conservancy.

Page 7

## From the Office of the Executive Director



Mike Nolan

We all celebrated the news last month that the Preserve grew by 6,400 acres, when the City of Scottsdale successfully bid on three parcels connecting the existing Preserve to the Tonto National Forest. That ten square miles of new land brings the total acreage to about 27,800, 64% larger than it was just two years ago.

With growth in land comes growth in our responsibilities, as we look forward to well over 100 miles of new trails to patrol and help maintain, a new major trailhead at Brown's Ranch, increased demand for guided hikes, and additional opportunities for nature guide programs for school classes and other special groups. We're already starting to look ahead to prepare for the expanded role all our steward programs must assume.

The bottom line is that we will need many more steward hours devoted to the Patrol, Pathfinder, and Construction & Maintenance programs, with the potential to increase our Hike and Nature Guide programs. The other programs that help support

these, such as Steward Education and Volunteer Support, will also have to add capacity.

We have launched a three-pronged effort to begin to ramp up to meet the coming needs. First, the Volunteer Support program led by John Cassidy is leading an effort to increase the number of new stewards we recruit during the next few years. This fall we offered two new steward orientations to train 41 new stewards. To try to further increase the number of new recruits beginning in January, our new steward orientations will take place on a single day – one Saturday – and the cost will decrease to \$35. The Steward Education program is revamping the orientation program and working closely with John and his team. We believe the new one-day orientation program may prove to be attractive, and I encourage you to talk about becoming a steward with friends and family who enjoy the outdoors.

We're also focusing on steward retention. A subcommittee within Volunteer Support, led by Raejean Fellows, is addressing a number of issues related to multi-year retention of existing stewards, working in concert with the Mentor program, Steward Education, and other applicable programs. Their goal is to ensure that we maintain a high number of stewards who return from year to year so we maintain their knowledge and expertise across our programs.

# From the Office of the Executive Director, cont.

Finally, program chairs are continuing to look at the specific impacts of Preserve growth on their programs in the coming two to three years. It is the stewards in each program who can best figure out how to manage the growth, determine how many new stewards they will need, and consider creative ways to meet the demands that growth places on us. We will need creative and flexible solutions to deliver effective results on the new lands in the north while continuing our already strong program activities in the McDowell Mountains.

I encourage you to become involved in the planning process by contacting your program chair. We need your ideas and energy to help us plan and position the organization for the next few years.

I also thank John and Raejean for their leadership of these efforts. If you'd like to volunteer to help either one, contact them directly, or contact me and I will put you in touch. Together we will meet the needs of the expanding Preserve and the needs of those who visit it.

## Welcome Class 34: 34 We Roar!



*Top Row (l to r): Stu Alt, Richard Mushorn, Lynn Mushorn, Elliot Gartner, Judy Krolikowski, Nicole Whiting, Megan Carter, Bill Fletcher, Chuck Wirtanen*

*Bottom Row (l to r): Joe Wager, Don Meserve, Jim Frier, Jr., Bob Frost, Bob Crewse, Jim Hartzel, Bob Shaffer, Mark Moser*

# Volunteer Support Report

By Raejean M. Fellows,  
Steward and Team Lead for Retention

It's been a busy month or two since we kicked off our work on steward retention. Our work in the first three months, from now until February, focuses on *discovery*. These are just a few of the questions to which we seek answers:

- What makes stewards stay?
- What are the obstacles to new stewards moving through the process of becoming ready to serve?
- How effective are we at giving stewards the tools they need to do their job?
- What preventative measures can we take to head off problems before they result in loss of steward enthusiasm and interest?
- What are the really unique parts of the steward experience?
- Are our measuring tools working—reporting hours?
- How satisfying are the relationships between steward/mentor and steward/chairperson?
- How effective are we at showing appreciation and recognition for the hours of service given by volunteers?
- What else could we be doing?

## What have we accomplished so far?

- Held two brainstorming meetings, on October 31 and November 20.
- Interviewed Mayo Clinic Volunteer Head, Kairin Whiteside, who leads a well-respected organization with more than 720 volunteers and a retention rate of 84%.
- Set up teams of phone callers, mentors and others to contact inactive stewards to determine why stewards are not contributing, or why they do not report. Paul Staker and Larry Persons are the leads on this substantial effort to call 20 stewards by 12/31/12. They are performing in-depth interviews to get the answers that we need.
- Developed “cheat sheets” for recording hours, walking a steward through each “click” of the mouse to record hours.

- Created a stepped-up mentor follow-up for new stewards, contacting them at 30/60/90 days after they begin service to ensure they are settling in well.
- Set up a free trial of gotomeeting.com to try conference call meetings.

At first blush, we have serious concerns over the issue of unreported hours. Our reports show that as many as 50% of new stewards are not reporting hours, either because they are not doing service hours, or because they neglect to report their hours.

## We urge all stewards to be conscientious about reporting hours

Without accurate records, we can't establish what our retention rate is or determine our recruitment needs. The McDowell Sonoran Preserve will be the largest urban preserve in the nation. Our volunteers are as precious as this land we work so hard to preserve. We want to be a place that exemplifies the best practices in the volunteer's relationship to the organization.

## Mentoring Role

The mentoring program is key to setting the volunteer's understanding of volunteer opportunities. With proper mentoring, stewards understand the organization, their role in it, and feel a sense of being a real stakeholder. If we have done our job right, they feel that they truly make a difference.

*We need more mentors.* Should you wish to become a mentor, contact Paul Staker at [pstaker@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pstaker@sbcglobal.net). The next mentor orientation is at Gateway, Sunday, December 16 from 4-5 pm. E-mail Paul to reserve your place.

We have made an excellent start. Thank you to all who have helped us with input, ideas, and, especially the callers who are reaching out to the stewards.

Stay tuned . . .



# Community Relations Report

by Barbara Pringle, Master Steward and Community Relations Chair

Community Relations volunteers have been busy over the past few months, engaging with the public through our four key sub-committee groups and meeting with the enthusiastic new stewards of Class 34. We continue to explore ways to more effectively share the story of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve and the work of our McDowell Sonoran Conservancy volunteers. Here are some brief highlights of recent happenings and accomplishments.

## Photography Committee

We upgraded and refreshed our traveling photo exhibit with new frames and new photos and moved it from Mayo Clinic to REI, Paradise Valley, where the photos are exhibited upstairs. The exhibit has been so popular that REI asked us to leave it there for six months! The photo committee decided to investigate sites for a second and maybe even third exhibit and hope to have positive news on that front soon.

We held an advanced photo workshop in October at that same REI store. Led by Bob Grebe, the workshop was so popular that there wasn't enough room for everyone who wanted to attend.

This season's photography contest start date was moved back to January 1, 2013 because of ongoing prioritization challenges with the new website that significantly delayed the opportunity to run an online-submission photo contest. We decided to go "old school" and allow digital copies on CD or prints to be submitted, as we used to do. Photos taken in the Preserve from June 1, 2012 through May 31, 2013 will be judged by the committee next June.

The committee selected photos to donate to the Conservancy Holiday Party raffle, and is working on 2013 workshops. It's a great committee full of creative ideas, and we're fortunate to have such talented photographers on our team.

## Speaker's Bureau

The speaker's bureau program continues at Sante Norte, with the next talk scheduled for December 17 (Master Steward Len Marcisz, Human History of the McDowells.) If anyone wants to refresh their

education, these are open to all. They're great information sources for new stewards, too, so check one out. Ask me, Linda Raish, or Committee Chair Jack Leonardo for dates and the specific location.

The committee is working on a framework for an "overview, MSC/MSP 101" talk that could be given to many groups around the area who are unfamiliar with what we do - and surprisingly, there are still lots of folks out there who have never heard of the Conservancy or the Preserve.

In October, one of our speakers spoke to a realtor's association, and they were thrilled with the presentation and want us to do more talks in the future. We need more speakers and ideas about which community groups would be a good target for our message, so let's hear your ideas.

## Outreach

Outreach volunteers were busy over the last few months, hosting our booth at various events. The huge Kids Fest weekend was November 16 and 17 and we had a great team of steward volunteers for each day to talk to kids and families. We had a booth at the grand opening of the Tom's Thumb trailhead, at REI Paradise Valley, and at the Gateway for a really successful Doggone Appreciation Day - people had photos taken with their dogs and these were posted on the Conservancy Facebook page, which prompted a big surge in activity there. We all love dogs!



Stewards Jared and Lily Parker in the Outreach Booth at Kids Fest

# Community Relations Report, cont.

We're working on the outreach calendar for next year and will have many other opportunities for you to be involved in this fun and dynamic program – and we need lots of stewards to help staff our events.

## Mountain Lines

Our next issue focuses on humans in the McDowells and the significant role women have played. It's another beautiful issue that should hit your mailboxes

## Report! Report! Report!

*by Bobby Alpert, Master Steward and Patrol Chair*

How many of you left the Patrol Orientation meeting, went home and reported those hours as Patrol hours or Education?

How many of you who attended the Board of Directors meeting in November reported those hours?

Hmm..... about half I bet.

When you take a grandchild to the Bajada Trail for a visit or go to the Conservancy office to help with a mailing, those are reportable hours. They are every bit as important as a 5-hour patrol, 3 hours of moving cacti with C & M or 2 hours of Pathfinding at Tom's Thumb.

I know I've been a stickler about reporting but you need to know this. *"If you don't report your hours, you were never there."*

Our contribution to the City of Scottsdale is based on reported hours. That time equals money. Scottsdale knows about all the hard work we do and they do appreciate the blood, sweat and tears we donate to the cause. But...oh how they love those hours!!

Remember, when you're done with that 5-hour patrol or 3-hour rock-moving job, if you don't report it, it never happened. Try telling that to your orthopedic surgeon!

in January. We welcome new writers and proofreaders, and in fact, are excited to learn that several new stewards want to join the team.

As you can see, Community Relations is fun, active and there's always an opportunity to get involved.



*Report those patrol hours!*



*Report those C&M hours!*

# MSC Rock Stars Roll into 2013

by Nancy Howe, Steward

The MSC Rock Stars are the brainchild of Conservancy steward Ralph Aufheimer, and Rock Stars don't have to know anything about geology. It's all about the bike. Ralph, 67 and a member of Class 30, was a first-time participant in the 2012 October Tour de Scottsdale's 30-mile ride that benefits McDowell Sonoran Conservancy.

"I had never done anything like that before," said Ralph. "I started training for the ride in August and figured that if I could ride the first half of the course, which was slightly uphill, then I could coast the second half. I told myself that I really only needed to ride 15 miles," he explained with a smile. "The idea of riding 30 miles was a little overwhelming when I first started thinking about it."

The main challenge of starting training in the heat of the summer was waking up early and riding when it was as cool as possible. Ralph didn't wear the typical racer's clip-in shoes and pedals, ride a super-light road bike, or join a bike club. "I concentrated on drinking enough water and riding the miles at my own pace. I did almost all my riding by myself on the streets around the Preserve, starting and ending where I live, around Bell Road and Thompson Peak," he said.

The desire to form a team and train together with like-minded, and like-aged, riders came to Ralph during the 2012 race itself. "I saw members of Oliver Smith's team wearing these great-looking jerseys and having a terrific time, cheering each other on during the race." Oliver Smith Jeweler served as Presenting Sponsor of the 2012 Tour and Oliver Smith, who served as MSC Board Chairman from 2010-2012, designed custom jerseys for the team of Oliver Smith riders, employees and friends led by Oliver himself, all of whom rode in the 30-mile event. "Seeing a big group like that supporting the Preserve made me think that the Conservancy should have a team. After all, our stewards were all over the event helping out as volunteers; we should have a presence in the ride too," Ralph pointed out. "It would be great to be riding and hear volunteers cheering for us, and we could thank the volunteers as we rode by."



*Oliver Smith-Presenting Sponsor, Suzanne Walden-Wells-Tour Director, 70-mile men's winner Eric Marcotte, George Siros, 2nd, Mike Nolan, Executive Director*

So the idea for the "Rock Stars" was borne. Ralph emphasizes that he would like the team to be mostly "older riders, over 50 at least," and that the goal of the team members would be to help each other finish the 30-mile mini-tour. "We won't discriminate against younger, faster riders," he said smiling, "but this team is for stewards like me, who start out thinking that 30 miles is a long, long bike ride. If we start training when it is cool, in January, then it will be much easier to maintain our training during the summer and complete the 30 miles comfortably next fall."

Ralph's goal was to complete the race without a flat tire or an accident, so he was delighted to cross the finish line without mishap. His big surprise came at the end of the race, when he checked the results board. "It was such a beautiful morning, and the leaders were far ahead of me, so I wasn't thinking of anything but finishing. When I saw the results, I was really surprised." Ralph finished second in his 65-69 age group. "The winner was 20 minutes ahead of me," Ralph said, "but the other 10 in the age group were all fairly close in times."

In fact, the mini-tour ride of 30 miles included 163 riders over age 50 in a field of 433. Those over-50 riders included 57 women, and Ralph strongly encourages women to join the group. "I'd like everyone to feel comfortable about riding. This would be a safe way for women to train, knowing that they would have a group to ride with," he said.



# MSC Rock Stars Roll into 2013, cont.

Ralph is recruiting for the Rock Stars now, and he says that he hasn't decided anything about what the training would look like. "I want to wait to see who is interested, and then we could meet in January and talk about what we'd like to do. It all depends on who would like to train together," he said.

If you'd like to indicate your interest in training for next October's Tour de Scottsdale, contact Ralph Aufheimer at [raufheimer@gmail.com](mailto:raufheimer@gmail.com)

## Meet Steward Marsha Lipps

*by Peggy McNamara, Steward*

Marsha is a native Chicago North Sider who grew up in the Evanston school district in Skokie. As an adult, she lived in Arlington Heights. But she always had a connection to Arizona. She would fly to the Valley several times a year to vacation and visit relatives, and summer road trips always included an Arizona stop.

During her visits to Arizona, Marsha loved to go horseback riding in the desert. These outings gave her a special connection to the desert environment. So it was no surprise that in 2008 she and her husband of 30 years, Steve (also a steward), eventually bought a vacation house in Scottsdale. But in 2009, it turned into a year-round home.

Although Marsha holds a degree in anthropology from the University of Illinois, she entered the field of nuclear medicine through an opportunity at the University of Chicago. Now, for the past 40 years, Marsha has been credentialed as a nuclear medical technologist. Her work posts include research, clinical imaging, chief technologist, and selling radiopharmaceuticals to nuclear medicine laboratories.

In 2000, while she was between jobs, she attended Harper College in Palatine, Illinois, where she became certified in web design and graphics. For many years she has managed a consultant's site involving online education for nuclear medicine physicians and technologists.

Marsha got involved with the Conservancy through her husband, Steve. He was serving as a member of the Stonegate Community Conservation Committee. Conservancy members, Steve Dodd and Ruthie Carll, came to a Stonegate Home Owners Association meeting to give a presentation about the Conservancy. They said the Conservancy could use volunteers in



*Marsha Lipps as Nature Guide*

many different jobs, including work at the office. At the time, Marsha and Steve's only child, David, had recently married. Marsha was looking for a way to keep busy and she thought computer work around the Conservancy office would be a good fit. So she signed up for steward training and graduated in 2010 with Class 26, the Marathoners.

Although Marsha does a lot of Conservancy work on the computer, she also works outside of the office a lot in the sunshine at Gateway Trailhead. She works actively on Nature Guides with Judi Irons, acting as Judi's backup for some Nature Guide events.

Marsha normally works most of the Family Fridays, and conducts school and private interpretive tours at the Bajada Nature Trail. Recently she co-created and

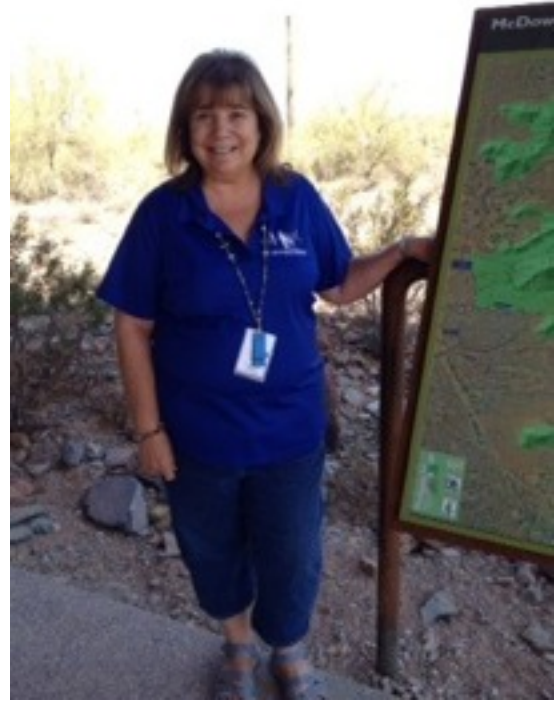
# Meet Steward Marsha Lipps, cont.

co-lead the Halloween hike--a public hike on the "Boojada" trail. Her enjoyment in working with student tours led to additional volunteering as a docent at the Center for Native and Urban Wildlife at Scottsdale Community College.

Beginning with Class 28, Marsha assisted Stuart Wolkoff and Jill Feinstein with New Steward Orientations. She handles all the duties and shopping leading up to the orientations. She does the registration, keeps track of all the paperwork for the city, and sets up and takes down the room. She also makes sure that the stewards in training have their information at hand and gets everyone fed. Finally, she urges them to buy a field guide! Her attention to detail led Jacques Giard to offer Marsha the Assistant Chair position for Steward Education, a position Marsha happily accepted last month.

As if all that is not enough, Marsha works several times a month as a Pathfinder on Sunday mornings at Gateway Trailhead. She has also adopted the Bajada Trail for her personal patrol. Frequently, she attends Core Leadership Team meetings generally handling the meeting notes and filling in if Jacques or Judi is not available.

Marsha explains why she works so hard at being a steward. She remembers returning to Scottsdale, after many years away. "It was shocking to see the encroachment of development in areas I fondly remembered as open desert. Protecting the desert and mountains, and the creatures within, was a cause I found personally important!" The Conservancy enables her to do that and to reconnect with the desert. She also loves working with a great group of friends who share her values.



*Marsha as Pathfinder at Gateway Trailhead*

Marsha has some great memories from her work as a steward. In particular, she remembers working in Nature Guides with her first Title One school group. "The kids were so excited with what they saw," she says. "They drew pictures about their visit and sent them to us through Judi. It really touched my heart. I could tell my participation had an impact on how they would view the Sonoran Desert."