



The Preserver

November 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.

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Jacques Giard provides an update on Steward Education program initiatives.	Welcome to the members New Steward Orientation Class 33.	Read the outcome of research into the Stoneman Road.	Learn about the inaugural Halloween nature hike.	If you missed it, read about the opening of our newest trailhead.	Rich Cochran is the subject of this month's steward introduction.
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From the Office of the Executive Director



Mike Nolan

You may not be aware of the Pastfinder program, a group of stewards interested in the human history of the Preserve. They are an active group working under the auspices of our McDowell Sonoran Field Institute. The Pastfinders research the historical heritage of the Preserve, and educate stewards and the public about the historical facts they discover.

Recently, the Pastfinders have completed a significant research project on the development, use, and actual route across the Preserve of the Stoneman Road, a late 19th-century military road between Ft. McDowell and Ft. Whipple, near Prescott. You can read more about their findings on page 4 of this newsletter. Other recent Pastfinder projects include researching the DC cattle brand, the namesake of DC Ranch. Other subjects of recent research are: Sydney Blout, "The Man Who Measured the McDowells," the first surveyor in the region, and the history of Brown's Ranch.

This dynamic group is always looking for stewards with an interest in history to join them in discovering more about the fascinating human past in the Preserve. A new opportunity has recently arisen to serve as the program lead. The current Pastfinder leader has found it necessary to step down for health reasons, and the position of Pastfinder lead is open. I encourage you to learn more about this opportunity.

A variety of interesting projects are open for investigation. One of the most important is to support the Scottsdale Historic Preservation Officer with the identification and protection of sensitive historic sites within the Preserve. We would like to know more about Frank Frasier, the namesake of Frasier Springs. Additional research on Sydney Blout would also be helpful. There are projects to digitize historical data, work on the Conservancy's historical archive, and to develop short presentations to educate other stewards about the Preserve's human history.

The Pastfinder leader would coordinate these and other projects with interested stewards and schedule periodic meetings with presentations on historical topics. If you'd like to learn more about Pastfinders and the leadership position, I encourage you to contact Research Program Coordinator Melanie Tluczek or Master Steward Len Marcisz. Please consider giving your time to this important program.

Steward Education Report

by Jacques Giard, Steward Education Program Chair

In my last report I focused on two important points for continuing an effective presence of the Conservancy in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. The first was the recruitment and training of stewards; the second was the place of continuing education for existing stewards. Let me give you a brief update on both.

By the time you read this article, we will have graduated two more groups of stewards – Class 33 and Class 34. The stewards of Class 33 gave themselves the name **Latitude 33**, which makes reference to the geographical latitude for many of the world's deserts including our own Sonoran desert. For its part, Class 34 selected the name **34 We Roar**.

In total, we have now added 36 stewards to our ranks. This is good news, clearly. As good as that number may first appear to be, it is not nearly good enough if we are to meet the challenges facing the Conservancy as trails open in the north. We need several hundred more stewards, especially bikers and equestrians. The Core Leadership Team, under Steve Dodd, has begun a recruitment campaign to attract as many new enrollees as possible. This is where you come in and where you can do your part. If each steward managed to get one friend, neighbor or relative to join the Conservancy, the challenge would easily be met.

The second point of importance is continuing education. Under the auspices of the Steward Education program, several of us met over the summer to discuss the best possible means to create learning opportunities for stewards. We are all aware that one of the reasons that many of you joined the Conservancy was because of the possibility of continuing education. The opportunity to keep learning is also likely a reason why many of you have stayed with us over the years.

However, Natural History 1 (NH1) and Natural History 2 (NH2) classes are not as well attended as they might be. The Steward Education team thus has decided to create stand-alone courses, rather than to combine all materials into two long sessions. For example, NH1 was a combination of four courses: ecology, geology, flora, and fauna. Together, the session was around eight hours in length.



Master Steward Steve Dodd teaching Natural History

In the future, NH1 will no longer be offered as it was in the past. The four components – ecology, geology, flora, and fauna – will be offered individually or, most often, in a set of two. The same principle will apply to courses in NH2 (human history, mining, and ethnobotany). We are still working on delivering these courses online. This change in delivery model has taken a bit more time to develop.

The creation of stand-alone courses is not the only development worthy of note. The Steward Education team has also met with Master Steward Bernie Finkel and John Cassidy, Volunteer Support program chair. Stand-alone courses will in great part be the basis for what will eventually become a new steward designation, that is, a rank between Steward and Master Steward. We will be developing a course-credit system to recognize those stewards who have earned this new rank. I will leave it to the Volunteer Support program to tell you more about this important initiative.

Other ideas? Perhaps you have some. If you do, I would love to hear from you. Please share your suggestions with me. I'm all ears. I can be reached at jrgiard@me.com.

Welcome Class 33: Latitude 33



*Top Row: Larry Glenn, Tony Siros, Charlie Tappero, Nancy Heck
Center Row: Frank Cowdrey, Jim Fishcer, Burton Halpern, Steve Fields, Matt Crewse, Melanie Tluczek, Jenny Ho, Greg Hoffman
Bottom Row: Bill Cartmell, Sue Cartmell, Marilyn Watson, LiYi Fu, Richard Bourke, Michelle Kass, Julie Dart, Harry Coolen*

Look for an introduction to Class 34 in the December issue of *The Preserver*.



Stoneman Road Compendium

by Melanie Tluczek, Research Program Coordinator

One of the lesser known programs of the Field Institute is the Pastfinders – a group made up of stewards, educators, professionals and amateur historians who are dedicated to uncovering the human history of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve.

Their mission is “...to generate enthusiasm for the McDowell Sonoran Preserve and Conservancy by informing the general public about the history and activities of the people who have been associated with the Preserve from ancient to present times.” Their alternate mission is to make history fun. This eclectic group has been carefully piecing together information on Native American inhabitants, mining, ranching, the Conservancy’s history, and all the colorful personalities who have been a part of making the Preserve what it is today. They partner with numerous governmental and historical organizations and have had press coverage in state and local news sources.

The Pastfinders’ most recent contribution is the Stoneman Road compendium. A compendium is a concise and comprehensive body of knowledge, and this impressive work truly lives up to the definition. The Pastfinders meticulously collected all written documents, maps, and references to the historical Stoneman Road, Scottsdale’s oldest artifact, and compiled them on CD for distribution to local and state historical organizations.

Stoneman Road is a 142-year-old road located in the northern portion of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. It was originally part of a network of trails used by Native American groups within the area. In 1870 Colonel George Stoneman, military commander of the Arizona Territory, ordered construction of the road. It was used extensively for the next 20 years as a conduit for supplies and military personnel between Fort McDowell and Fort Whipple. After Fort McDowell closed, the road was seldom used and it disappeared to all but the most discerning eyes. In 2006 Master Steward Larry Levy noticed the traces of the road, and began organizing volunteers and experts to examine it further. The result was the Stoneman Road Task Force, and a compendium that tells the story of this important artifact.



Colonel George Stoneman, Jr.

In researching the Stoneman Road, the Pastfinders uncovered several surprising facts. Historians had previously stated that George Stoneman had personally scouted the road in 1870. This was not the case. Second, the history books stated that Stoneman first traveled the road on October 2. Stoneman’s first journey along the road was October 1; his purpose was not to scout, but to assess construction and suitability for wagon travel. Last, there were several Stoneman Roads, as the route split north of Fraesfield Mountain and continued on either side.

The Pastfinders brought this piece of history back to life, and made key contributions in the process. This provides a powerful example of what can be accomplished when a diverse group of volunteers combines their creativity and dedication.

For more information about the Stoneman Road or to become a Pastfinder, contact Master Steward Len Marcisz lmarcisz@aol.com.

The Boojada Trail

by Marsha Lipps, Steward

We had our first Halloween-themed Hike/Nature Hike at the Bajada Trail on Sunday, October 28th. Judi Irons', Conservancy Naturalist, and Hike Chair Franco Farina's request to put together a Halloween holiday hike was something I have wanted to do for the last two years.

Yes, Halloween is my favorite holiday, and I miss the interaction I enjoyed for so many years as my son and his friends celebrated it! I felt that since the Nature Guide program interacts with so many children and families that it would be fun to tie together desert education with some fun holiday thrills.

Fellow Steward Sue Handke and I put our heads together, assigning each other topics to research for the hike. Since both of us love learning about many of the desert creepy and crawlies...we decided to go to the heart of the spirit of Halloween, and turn it on its head.

Our contention was that many of the symbols of Halloween--bats, spider webs, creepy birds and spiders and bugs--actually have great value to the Sonoran desert. We have engineers, top guns, high-end hotels, and desert janitors that reside around us. Our childish fears tend to melt away when we understand how important these creatures are to our desert environment.



Steward Marsha Lipps leading the Boojada hike



Creepy crawly scorpion and



We wanted to turn Halloween upside down. The only bump we ran into was the fact that the children who participated were much younger than the group we were targeting- so we had to go into extreme G-rated mode instead of PG.

Sue did half the research, but wasn't available to co-lead the hike, so we were very happy to have Steward Rich Cochran step up and take on her topics. Steward Nancy Howe knew about the topics we were developing and had her own take and photos on discovering new ways to look at the Saguaro. Master Steward BJ Tatro and Stewards Ed Rubin and Wendy Rennart were wonderful assists. Although the Nature Guide and Hike programs are closely aligned, it was my first time leading a hike. But, everything turned out very well!

I won't go into the heart of our discussions since I believe we will repeat this hike next year. I hope all of you will come next year and bring your kids and grandkids to enjoy this hike. We didn't travel very far into the Preserve, but our feedback was positive and no one cried! Our goal was to create a sugar-free interpretive Halloween hike with those little memorable nuggets of information as our treats.

Tom's Thumb Trailhead Opening

by Peggy McNamara, Steward

About 100 people gathered for the opening ceremonies at the Tom's Thumb and Marcus Landslide Trailhead. Mayor Jim Lane welcomed the crowd and Mary Ann Marcus, widow of Dr. Melvin G. Marcus, namesake of the Marcus Landslide.

Mayor Lane introduced two speakers from the Yavapai Nation. Yavapai Council Members talked about the history of the Yavapai people and related personal stories about growing up near the McDowell mountains. They described how their families hunted and picnicked there, and how the tribe used the plants from the land. They said the tribe held council meetings in the Tom's Thumb area and that the place is sacred to them, and they urged everyone to respect the land.

Vice-Mayor Dennis Robbins, lifetime resident of Scottsdale, saluted the citizens of Scottsdale who voted for taxes to procure Preserve lands, and thanked the stewards who work there. He praised the architects and construction workers who built the trailhead structures, placing them on already disturbed land and using building materials from the site.

Next, Mayor Lane reminded everyone of Bill 1118, which was introduced in the Arizona Legislature this year. The bill would have allowed Growing Smarter conservation funds to be swept into other projects instead of using these funds to help buy Preserve land. He praised the Conservancy and citizens of Scottsdale for successfully mounting a campaign to kill the bill.

Kroy Ekblaw, Strategic Project Director, spoke about Preserve progress during the last twenty years. He noted that the Preserve began life as a controversial idea, but has evolved into a conservation area of 21,400 acres. He announced that just before Thanksgiving, the City of Scottsdale will bid on the remaining 10 square miles of land north of Brown's Ranch. This acquisition will connect the Preserve to the Tonto National Forest.

The Mayor then officiated over the ribbon-cutting ceremony with special guest, Tom Krueser. Krueser was the first mountaineer to ascend Tom's Thumb in 1963. Instead of the traditional use of ribbon and scissors, Krueser unclashed a carabiner that was holding two pieces of climbing rope together.



*"Ribbon-Cutting" at Tom's Thumb Trailhead opening
From left: Councilman Ron McCullagh, Tom Krueser,
Mayor Jim Lane, Councilman Dennis Robbins*

Meet Steward Rich Cochran

by Peggy McNamara, Steward

After researching various locations in Florida and California, Dr. Rich Cochran and his wife decided to move from the Midwest to Scottsdale. They chose Scottsdale because of the weather and the many cultural and sporting events available in the Valley. Rich saw Scottsdale as a good place to finish work as a physician and retire *in situ*.

Rich was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. When he was two years old, his family moved to Fort Wayne, Indiana. It was here in his fifth grade math class that he met the girl who would later become his wife. Gloria and Rich have been married for 41 years.

Rich attended college at Indiana University. He received a B.A. in Biology and a Master's Degree in Endocrinology from Indiana University, followed by an M.D. from Indiana's School of Medicine. The Cochrans then left Indiana so Rich could complete his residency in pathology at the University of Michigan School of Medicine. Eventually, they settled in Ohio where Rich worked as a pathologist in Ohio hospitals for 20 years.

In 2002, after too many years of snow and continuous winter cloud cover, the Cochrans moved to Scottsdale. Rich took a position as the Medical Director of a private medical laboratory in Tempe. In 2010, Rich retired, or so he thought. Recently, however, he has begun working in medicine again, although now it is on a part-time basis.

It was after his short-lived retirement in 2010, that Rich began his involvement with the Conservancy. The Cochrans live very close to the Preserve, and they enjoy hiking in the Lost Dog area. Inspired by what he saw, Rich decided he wanted to do something to help preserve the desert for the future. Through the encouragement and help of his mentor, Jack McEnroe, and many other stewards, Rich also became a steward. Now he volunteers as a Pathfinder and a Nature Guide. He is a member of the Government Relations and Advocacy Committee and is also active in the Volunteer Support group. Recently, he accepted the position of Steward Retreat Coordinator. Soon he hopes to become active in the Reptile Research program.



Steward Rich Cochran and Sundance

When Rich is not volunteering with the Conservancy, he and his dog Sundance might be found visiting at a local Alzheimer's center. Rich and Sundance are a certified Dog Therapy team. This has been a very rewarding experience for both Rich and Sundance. You might just meet Rich and his dog hiking in the Preserve. Sundance is a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel and is an avid hiker.

Retirement has also brought Rich more time to read and travel to Mexico, Europe and a long-time favorite, Volcano National Park on the big island of Hawaii. During football season, though, Rich is attending the Arizona Cardinal football games.

Rich's interest in the natural world began in university biology classes. He spent many hours in the libraries and laboratories studying biological systems, anatomy, physiology, evolution, taxonomy, genetics and the scientific method. The power of nature, as exemplified by volcanoes, the biological diversity of plant and animal life in the Sonoran desert, and the interrelatedness of plants and animals, fascinates him. "When it comes to the Preserve," Rich explains, "I have a special respect for the metaphor of the desert -- adaptation to life's sometimes challenging environment."