

Mountain Lines

Vol. 19 • No. 2 • Fall 2012



Powerful Preserve Imagery

Meet Conservancy photographers who share their views of photography.

Wildland Urban Interface

How can development affect the Preserve?

Get Fit by Nature

What is biophilia and do I have it?



McDowell Sonoran
CONSERVANCY.



I first met Tim Beatley about a year ago, after he called me from his office in Charlottesville, Virginia, to tell me he had been following the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy

from afar. He was particularly interested in our steward program, and how we have successfully developed a large group of citizen volunteers to help the City of Scottsdale manage the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. What motivates our stewards to volunteer, he wondered?

He visited Scottsdale soon after and met with a number of stewards, continuing to learn more about the Conservancy and our work. Our focus on involving hundreds of citizen volunteers in the day-to-day management of the Preserve is a way to create meaningful connections with nature, a core concept behind his “biophilic cities” movement, described on pages 14 and 15. The Preserve and the Conservancy, he believes, can be an inspiration for other cities that hope to incorporate nature into the civic fabric of parks, preserves, and open spaces, and to involve their citizens in stewardship.

The McDowell Sonoran Preserve’s place in Scottsdale’s civic fabric — and citizen involvement in Preserve stewardship — will continue to grow in a few months, with the expected purchase of an additional 10 square miles of

“Tell me and I’ll forget;
show me and
I may remember; involve
me and I’ll understand.”
—Chinese Proverb

land. This important piece will connect the existing Preserve with the Tonto National Forest, completing a natural corridor between the Tonto, the Preserve, and the adjacent county park, and enhancing the long-term sustainability of the plants and animals that live there.

It will also add many miles of trails to be patrolled and managed and acres of land that can benefit from restoration activities, and so we continue to seek more stewards who can help with these efforts.

On October 20, we’ll applaud another addition to the Preserve with the opening celebration for the Tom’s Thumb Trailhead and a beautiful new trail to the Marcus Landslide, a half-million year old rockslide that is one of the largest in Arizona. Located on the east side of the McDowell Mountains, the trail includes interpretive signs focused on the geology of the Preserve and the region and on the many possible geologic causes of the landslide. Start the fall season by joining us this day to learn about this new gateway into the Preserve. I hope to see you there. 🌿

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Cover Photo: A breathtaking view from Bell Pass Trail. Photo by: T. Roche

About Us

The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy champions the sustainability of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve for the benefit of this and future generations. As stewards, we connect the community to the Preserve through education, research, advocacy, partnerships and safe, respectful access.

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New Conservancy Website

Social media has transformed the way our society communicates with one another. In addition to a simple phone call or email message, we reach friends, family and colleagues in many different ways. In an effort to reach out to our friends and supporters near and far, we designed a new website that allows you to get all the information you want and to connect with us through social media from one site. The new site will enable you to easily follow and communicate with us via Facebook, read more about what is happening in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve and with our Field Institute through our updated blog, and purchase field guides and maps online through our website gift shop. The site features a new section called Visit the Preserve that will provide detailed information for self-guided hikes on more than 60 miles of Preserve trails, including elevation profiles, what you may see along the trails, and hike maps. Please visit our new website often to learn about what is happening with the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy, the Preserve and global environmental issues; to learn more about enjoying the Preserve; and to connect with us through social media: www.mcdowellsonoran.org. 🐦

Photo by: N Zenhausern

Become a Steward

Work hard, have fun and make an impact on your community. Volunteers champion the conservation of open space, steward the McDowell Sonoran Preserve and engage the community in preserving our environment. What we all have in common is our passion for the outdoors and a desire to make our community a better place. The first steward-orientation classes of the season are coming up in September and October. Learn everything from how and why the Conservancy was founded, to how to properly identify and report a problem on the trail, and everything in between. Use your skills and discover hidden talents while working alongside enthusiastic, mission-focused individuals. Register today by calling Jill at 480-998-7971, ext. 104. 🐦





Photo by: D. Bierman

Conservancy Photographers Connect People to Preserve

By Nancy Howe
McDowell Sonoran Conservancy Steward

A cadre of mostly amateur photographers supplies the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy with the photographs that appear in Mountain Lines. All participate in a tradition of “concerned photographers” that can be traced to photographer Cornell Capa, founder of the world-renowned International Center of Photography in New York City. According to Capa, “None are dispassionate observers. They all take sides and make strong statements about what they have seen and experienced.”

Capa easily could have been describing today’s International League of Conservation Photographers (www.ilcp.com). Tucson-based photographer Jack Dykinga, a regular contributor to Arizona Highways and judge for the Conservancy’s 2008 photography contest, helped organize the ILCP, an affiliation of 102 of some of the best photographers in the world who use their skills to further conservation efforts. According to the ILCP, “There is no better way to awaken social conscience than through powerful imagery.”

Dykinga sees “powerful imagery” as a balancing act: “Sometimes you want to shock people; sometimes you want to seduce people.” “As a photographer, I worry

about turning people off. I take beautiful pictures to show what could be lost. As I get older, I concentrate more on the uplifting images: what we could be, what we should be."

Similarly, local photographer and Conservancy steward Richard Buchbinder, who leads the Conservancy's photography workshops says, "Photography can serve as a window to the beautiful places of our world. Through slide presentations and published images, I soon noticed that when people viewed images of our wild places, they developed a more personal connection to the environment. People who experience that personal relationship with the great outdoors are more inclined to support community efforts to protect our limited wilderness areas."

Using the beauty of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve to create a personal connection to the desert for others is often mentioned by Conservancy photographers when asked about their own photography. The first step in creating connection, says Conservancy steward and photographer Barry White, is taking viewers to the Preserve. "I think photography can be used to make people aware of what the Preserve is like, what is in it, and how it is a valuable resource for the City of Scottsdale. Not everyone can experience it firsthand, and many who could may not be aware of what is there. If they see the images, it helps make a connection to the Preserve that might otherwise be missed."

Sonoran Arts League photographer and Preserve enthusiast Bob Grebe says, "My hope is that when the images are seen by other hikers, they will be reminded to both enjoy what they can see and remember to support the need to preserve this beauty." Fellow photographer Dave Stoker agrees. "Photography can inspire action and remind people there are things that deserve protection.

Whether or not the viewer will ever put on a pair of hiking boots and explore the trails of the Preserve does not matter."

Ed Mertz, the photographer who captured the Bajada Nature Trail's panorama, seeks images that bring natural events to those who can't experience them firsthand. "A photo of a young hawk being released to the wild, a flowering of a rare cactus plant, or a mountain view at the end of a long, strenuous hike ... Some of the events will never oc-

cur or be seen again, yet the photograph will endure for many years to come."

Photographer and Conservancy steward Marianne Jensen, creator of the Conservancy's flora guides, agrees that photography can reveal the rarely seen. Through her guides, Jensen says, "I wanted to show people what they haven't seen before, and as it turns out, most people had not seen the majority of the tiniest flowers. My hope with the guide is that it brings awareness to how precious

Richard Buchbinder helps the viewer develop a more personal connection with nature through his photography. Photo by: R. Buchbinder



Barry White takes the viewer to a place in the Preserve not often seen; here from the Lookout viewpoint on the Tom's Thumb trail, looking southeast over Fountain Hills toward Weaver's Needle and the Superstition Mountains. Photo by: B. White





A magnificent view east from Tom's Thumb encourages support of the unique natural environment found in the Preserve. Photo by: D. Stoker

Ed Mertz captures a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Photo by: E. Mertz



our Sonoran Desert is, and that it moves [viewers] to vote toward conservation.”

Steward photographer Tom Roche suggests that an emotional connection is built on a foundation of understanding. “I believe that people care about things that they can see and understand. Photography gives us an opportunity to appreciate the beauty that exists in the desert and to reveal this unique ecosystem to others.” And, photographer Sue Cullumber says her photographic goal is “to teach and provide an understanding about the natural world and convey a passion.”

Photographer and steward Barb Jabara aims to first create a deeply emotional response for the viewer, provoking experiences of “joy, inquisitiveness, curiosity, excitement, escape, peacefulness, solitude.” Emotion, Jabara says, “leads to an awareness of beauty.” Photographer steward Nina Parish also speaks of the emotional bridge between viewer and photographer. Says Parish, “Photographs capture the mood and feelings that the scenes evoked in the photographer.” Videographer and photographer steward Randy Raish agrees, saying “At that moment of capturing an image the person behind the lens has the ability to shape the perspective the viewers see.”

For photographer Jim Hamilton, photography is a tool to preserve history and accurately document today. “Photos show and tell how the natural beauty of the landscape can become damaged by neglect and poor preservation or planning, and through this, hopefully encourage others to respect and protect our natural landscape.”

Arizona State University professor and frequent Conservancy photography-contest judge Mark Klett believes that, “More than pretty pictures, the best photographs assure us that we are con-

nected to the land and its history rather than simply detached observers. And if we believe we have a stake in a place, we're less likely to treat it with indifference."

Photography makes people aware of their stake in nature, says steward Don Bierman, a Conservancy Focus on Conservation photography-contest winner. "Why do we conserve or preserve something rather than consume or destroy it? Because we have an affinity or an emotional connection to it." Bierman's photographic goal is to increase peoples' awareness of beauty, and to "heighten our desire to save what we like for our own satisfaction and for those who may follow. Or in the case of ugliness or destructiveness, photography helps convince us to remediate the problem and repair the scars."

From Jack Dykinga's global perspective, project-driven photography will further environmental conservation, one viewer at a time. Because climate change is so slow and so incremental, "we need a Sputnik moment," he contends. His hope is that photography, as practiced by the ILCP and by our own Conservancy photographers, can be instrumental in that sea-change event by creating images of both the beauty and wonder of the natural world, and the challenges facing it. 🌱

Nancy Howe has been a steward with the Conservancy for 5 years. She recently retired from the Conservancy as office manager, and now uses her masters degree in exercise physiology to promote activity in the Preserve and among people recovering from surgery and cancer.



Marianne Jensen showcases these tiny flowers to help the viewer appreciate the beauty of the Preserve. Photo by: M. Jensen



A unique photograph shows the natural beauty of the desert. Photo by: J. Hamilton

Focus on Conservation Photography Contest Goes Green

The Focus on Conservation photography contest has produced beautiful illustrations of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, and the winning photos have been displayed throughout the Valley to increase awareness of our treasured open space. To create a more sustainable contest, save resources and continue to highlight the Preserve through beautiful photos, the contest is now completely electronic. Submit your photos taken in, and of, the Preserve online through a gallery on our new website. Learn more on the website at www.mcdowellsonoran.org, grab your camera and let the Preserve be your canvas. Source: Conservancy Staff

Watchable Wildlife: Bats

By Kellie Elliott
McDowell Sonoran
Field Institute Intern



Photo by: J. Loza

Arizona provides a habitat for 28 different species of the world's only flying mammal, the bat. Two of the most common bats of the Phoenix area, Canyon and Townsend's Big-Eared, were documented on the Preserve during the spring bat survey conducted earlier this year at Dixie Mine.

Myths and misunderstandings about the activities of bats have led to many misconceptions and unwarranted fear. To dispel the first big myth, there are no hematophagic, or bloodsucking, bats in the United States. Of the 1,232 known species of bats in the world only three are hematophagic varieties, all residing in Central and South America.

A second major fear people have of bats is rabies. While rabies can be transmitted by bats, a rabid bat will almost certainly not attack a human directly. One of the most important measures you can take to avoid rabies exposure, from any animal not just bats, is to keep your pets up to date on their rabies vaccinations. As well, keep your dogs on leashes no longer than six feet when enjoying the outdoors. If you have children, make sure they know not to handle sick or injured wildlife and instead report it to an adult. Educate yourself and your children about

the signs of rabies in animals and even the appearance of a bat when it is not in flight. If you encounter a bat that appears rabid (for instance, a bat seen during the day or a bat that is unable to fly), keep people and pets away from it and contact your local animal control office to report the animal.

You are much more likely to encounter a bat in flight at dusk, swooping and diving for bugs or water. It is a magnificent sight, crucial to the ecosystem, to be admired not feared. A single insectivorous bat will eat thousands of bugs per night during plentiful seasons, some bat species traveling more than 20 miles to accomplish the task. With all that flying, not one bat has ever been reported to have gotten stuck in a person's hair, contrary to a popular myth. Those few bat species in Arizona that do not eat pesky mosquitoes are nectivorous varieties. Preferring the night-blooming columnar cacti, bats are some of the most important pollinators of the glorious Saguaro blossom.

With these facts in mind, it is important that we do our best to ensure a safe, suitable habitat is always available to bats. The simplest way to create a bat-friendly environ-

ment is to seal cracks or small passageways that a bat might enter to roost in your home. Remember that a bat cannot distinguish an attic from a cave; either one is suitable shelter. Eliminate the attic option to avoid hazardous conditions and unwanted interaction. Go one step farther and provide another housing option for your batty friends: purchase a bat house online for \$25 to \$80. If you are handy, plans to build your own bat house can also be found online. It may take time for the bats to inhabit the new shelter but one day it will likely provide a valuable resource for a bat in need. The Arizona Game and Fish Department offers great advice and information about bat houses in the Bat Conservation and Management section of their website (www.azgfd.gov).

Whether you interact with bats daily or have never seen one in your life, be assured that these animals provide an invaluable service to people through pollination, seed dispersal and insect control. 🦇

Kellie Elliott has been working as an intern for the Conservancy's Field Institute mammal study since last summer. When she is not busy in the field she is working toward a B.S. in Biology at Scottsdale Community College, and will be transferring to Arizona State University in spring 2013. After she graduates, Kellie intends to continue a life of field work with a focus on ecology and habitat management.

Science in the Wildland Urban Interface

By Kaitlin Toledo and Aaron Fisher
McDowell Sonoran Field Institute Interns

If you go into the McDowell Sonoran Preserve early in the morning, you may spot a group of enthusiastic folks with string and measuring tapes, and wonder what they are doing. These Conservancy interns and stewards are carrying out research on wildland-urban interfaces.

A wildland-urban interface (WUI) is the transition zone between natural, undeveloped lands (like the Preserve), and land that has been developed. While there are many definitions of the size of a WUI (extending 30 – 200 feet from a human structure), our team decided to survey a smaller, more specific and easier to manage section of land rather than the entire boundary. We conduct our research by going to predetermined survey locations and studying areas that are 50 meters long by 10 meters wide. These areas, known as belt transects, are designated within the WUI, and are found along the Preserve boundary. Each plot is surveyed meter by meter, watching for invasive plant species, animal hotspots, and other potential indicators of human impact (e.g., removal of trees, trash dumping, and feeding wildlife.) At these locations, human-caused disturbances, if any, are counted and their locations noted.

We study WUIs because they can be used as an indicator of the overall health of the Preserve. Because of the proximity of natural and urban lands in this area and the great similarities between WUI natural land and the inner parts of the Preserve, there is a possibility that human impacts at the WUI could travel further into the Preserve. If the WUI has a high occurrence of human impacts such as littering, food left for wildlife, or perhaps tree removal, it may in-

dicating which impacts can move further into the Preserve. For example, if the survey finds a high occurrence of non-native plants residing within the WUI, their seeds may spread further into the Preserve, out-competing native plants and altering the natural habitat. Information collected will help the Conservancy, in partnership with the City of Scottsdale, manage these areas and maintain the Preserve's health and beauty for further generations. Data collected will also act as a baseline to help with future monitoring or remediation projects throughout the Preserve.

Whether or not you live in the wildland-urban interface, you can limit your impact and protect the flora and fauna that call the Preserve home:

- Stay on the trails and keep your pets on leash when you visit the Preserve. Clean up after your pets and carry the waste to the trash cans at Preserve trailheads.
- If you carry anything with you into the Preserve (such as water bottles), carry everything back out.
- Wild animals should not be fed and you should make no attempt to catch them. This is for your safety and the safety of the animals!

We can all work together to protect the natural beauty and health of the Preserve. 🌿

Kaitlyn Toledo is a recent graduate from Northern Arizona University with a degree in Environmental Sciences: Biology. She worked on the Field Institute's plant community survey last summer and is currently assisting in the Institute's WUI study. Kaitlyn plans on pursuing a career in ecological research with a mix of lab and fieldwork.

Aaron Fisher is a recent graduate of Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia. He graduated with a B.S. in Biology and History, and is looking for a job in a state or national park where he can utilize his knowledge and background.

Photo by: D. Bierman



The Marcus Landslide is the 2nd largest landslide in Arizona.
Photo by: M. Jensen







Marcus Landslide Trail. Photo by: M. Jensen

Meet Dr. Mel Marcus: Geographer and Legend

By Peggy McNamara
McDowell Sonoran Conservancy Steward

In 2002, Dr. John Douglass and Brian Gootee discovered a landslide on the eastern slopes of the McDowell Mountains. They were graduate students at Arizona State University (ASU) at the time of their discovery and decided to name the landslide after Dr. Melvin G. Marcus, a former Professor of Geography at ASU. They and their fellow students admired Dr. Marcus for his teaching skills, the wonderful field trips he led and his congenial personality.

Marcus loved family life, social occasions, teaching, research, exploring, mountain climbing, art and literature. He played college basketball at Yale, was a pilot in the Air Force and a drummer in musical groups.

As a teenager in Seattle during the 1940s, Marcus spent weekends climbing mountains. He made 52 first ascents by age 19 (a first ascent is the first documented attainment of the top of a mountain, or the first to follow a particular climbing route) and was inducted into the American Alpine Club as its youngest member. Following this interest, he studied geology at Yale and worked on Harvard research teams that pioneered studies of the giant glaciers of Alaska and the Yukon. The most important lesson he learned there was that he could make a living pursuing his interest in arctic and alpine environments.



Dr. Mel Marcus Photo courtesy of: Marcus Family

Marcus joined the Air Force after his junior year at Yale. But before deploying to Korea as a pilot, he married Mary Ann Allen of Miami. After returning to civilian life, he began studies in the broader field of geography. Eventually he earned a Ph.D. in Geography from the University of Chicago.

Marcus taught geography around the world. He enthusiastically organized field trips for students, family and friends. They studied climatology, glaciology, geomorphology, meteorology and botany in both alpine and polar regions.

Marcus' energy, wit and generosity acted as a magnet for students. He invited them to his home and encouraged them in their work. Many students became partners in his adventures and his friends for life.


Marcus' interest in teaching had a significant impact on geography education. He headed the commission of the National Science Foundation which developed teaching standards that re-established the importance of field work in geography. He worked with the American Academy of Sciences, served as President of the American Geographical Society and served on the boards of many geographical organizations.

Marcus also acted as chief scientist for research projects, authored books and published over 100 research papers. He became one of the world's most important researchers in climatology and polar geography.

Closer to home, Marcus studied the effects of Arizona's dust storms on traffic fatalities. His findings resulted in regulations regarding dust control practices in agriculture throughout the state. He organized field trips to study climatology and vegetation at the bottom of the Grand Canyon. Wherever he went, he centered his research on field work, theory and enjoyment.

On a field trip in the Colorado Mountains in 1997, Marcus died of a heart attack while snowshoeing with only his dog for company. When he failed to return to his group, members of his party went

searching for him. They found his body in the snow with his dog waiting beside him in the same mountain meadow where his oldest son was married some years before.

Scholarships honor the memory of this outstanding teacher. Marcus holds the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Association of American Geographers and the prestigious Cullum Geographical Medal of the American Geographical Society. Now a geographical feature bears the name of this remarkable man. Mary Ann Marcus, his wife for 47 years and the mother of their four children said, "Mel would have been thrilled!" 

Peggy McNamara has been a Conservancy steward for one year. Retiring after an extensive career as a software engineer, she now writes articles for Mountain Lines and the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy's volunteer newsletter; works on the Construction & Maintenance crew and helps with volunteer events. She also volunteers as a Robotics Judge at student robotics competitions organized by FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition in Science and Technology).

Tom's Thumb & Marcus Trail Grand Opening

Join us in October at grand opening events for the Tom's Thumb Trailhead and Marcus Landslide Interpretive Trail! Scottsdale Mayor Jim Lane will cut the ribbon on the newest Preserve trailhead on October 18 at 7:30 a.m. at his annual breakfast in the Preserve, marking the official opening. On October 20, we will celebrate the area with games and activities for the whole family! Conservancy volunteers will host hikes and offer talks about the area, and mountain climbers will give demonstrations. Prizes will be awarded to those who complete a themed scavenger hunt, and you can be one of the first to pick up the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy Family Passport. For more information, please call Nancy at the Conservancy offices at 480-998-7971.

Source: Conservancy Staff



Kids enjoy an outing with their family in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. Photo by: B. Yale

Biophilic Cities and the McDowell Sonoran Preserve

By Barb Pringle
McDowell Sonoran Conservancy Master Steward

When humans instinctively reach out to the natural world when we seek solace, strength, solitude and significance. This need for nature has been termed biophilia by Harvard biologist Edward O. Wilson. He describes biophilia as, “the innately emotional affiliation of human beings to other living organisms. Innate means hereditary and hence part of ultimate human nature.”

Sadly, in today’s increasingly urban environment (by 2050, it’s estimated that 70% of us will live in cities), it can be hard to connect in a meaningful way with nature. Yet, increasing scientific evidence shows that we need nature for emotional, physical and psychological health. For example, multiple research studies show that contact with the natural world reduces stress, aids recovery from illness, enhances cognitive skills and academic performance, and moderates the impact of ADHD in children. One study showed that parasympathetic brain activity, which occurs when we’re relaxed, increased by over 55% when test subjects strolled through

a forest. Another study even suggested that we are more generous when we are immersed in nature.

So how do we reconcile our urban lifestyle with our biophilic nature? Enter the Biophilic Cities movement, an initiative organized by Professor Tim Beatley of the University of Virginia's School of Architecture. His ambitious goal is to develop best practices for creating biophilic cities; i.e., urban settings that blend with the natural world. Beatley measures the level of biophilia in urban areas by considering such factors as the percentage of population within a few hundred feet of a green space; percentage of city land covered by vegetation; percentage of local residents who can identify local flora and fauna; and priority given to nature conservation by local government.

The McDowell Sonoran Preserve has caught Beatley's attention and he is enthusiastic about its contribution to the creation of a desert biophilic city. He noted in a recent article published in an issue of *Planning*, a national magazine serving urban planning professionals, that, "To many critics the Phoenix metro area is an example of the results of unfettered development. Yet this urban area boasts some of the most impressive desert conservation efforts anywhere and offers important lessons for other cities." Beatley goes on in the article to describe the creation of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve and the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy. Praising the Conservancy's volunteers who help build and maintain trails, patrol the Preserve, and study the native flora

"To be happy
and healthy
and lead
meaningful
lives, we
need contact
with nature."

University of Virginia Professor
Tim Beatley

and fauna, Beatley suggests that our Preserve and Conservancy can offer inspiration for other cities striving to become more biophilic.

For example, Beatley notes that:

- The creation of the Preserve was a grass-roots effort of Scottsdale citizens who showed a repeated willingness to tax themselves to generate funds for land purchase. Citizen engagement is key to creating green spaces in urban areas.
- The Conservancy's volunteer framework offers a "model of resilience" for cities struggling with staffing budgets.
- Recent land acquisitions by Scottsdale ensure connectivity with other blocks of conserved land beyond the city's border, including the Tonto National Forest

and the Verde River area. Connectivity helps preserve wildlife corridors and enhances genetic diversity among local flora and fauna.

- While the greater Phoenix area struggles with heat-island effects, "the Preserve's micro-climate keeps it cooler, thus allowing it to serve an important biological function as a regional climate refuge."

Next time you're out enjoying the Preserve or talking with one of the more than 400 Conservancy volunteers, be proud that your local community is one example of, as Beatley says, "How nature can be saved close to cities, making all of us happier and healthier. The Scottsdale project is a model that shows us how to actively engage urbanites of all ages in the management and enjoyment of urban natural areas."

Further reading:

1. Beatley, T., "Ever Green," *Planning Magazine*, March 2012.
2. Biophilic Cities, <http://www.biophiliccities.org>.
3. Schwartz, A. "Why We Need Biophilic Cities," <http://www.fastcoexist.com>.
4. Wilson, E.O., *Biophilia*, Harvard University Press, 1984. 

Barb Pringle has been a steward with the Conservancy for seven years and is currently serving as the Community Relations program chair. She enjoyed a successful career in technology marketing and now applies her skills and love for the Preserve in a way that strengthens the organization's impact in Scottsdale.



Stewards lead kids and their parents on a hike along Desert Park Trail. Photo by: R. Raish

Family Hiking Events Emphasize Wellness, Discovery and Holiday Fun

By Barb Pringle
McDowell Sonoran Conservancy Master Steward

We have all heard about the increasing incidence of childhood obesity and diabetes. You know that it's critically important for your kids to get regular exercise so they live a healthier lifestyle and learn how to integrate physical activity into their daily lives. One of the best ways to help your children be more active is to get them outdoors into Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve. Happily, there are a wide variety of programs for kids and three types of hikes that can involve the entire family. Take a look at the programs offered by the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy. These family-oriented hikes start in late September and are sure to be fun, educational and healthy outings.

▪ Discovery Hikes

Take your child to explore the wonders of nature as you pass on the value of caring for the outdoors and our native plants and wildlife. When children learn to love the outdoors, they tend to grow up as active proponents for conserving open space. Don't know the trails? Join the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy volunteers on Discovery Hikes in Scottsdale's beautiful Preserve. These hikes are an ideal blend of fun, exercise and learning; they are perfect for all ages and abilities. For example, participants will enjoy stories from Conservancy volunteer hike leaders about the ways in which native peoples used desert plants for food, shelter, rituals and medicine. On that hike, you and your kids will be able to picture the native peoples living during ancient times. Other hikes teach ways to identify animal tracks or invite you to join a


fun treasure hunt for signs of wildlife. All hikes are free, so bring your family and friends together and join us for a fun and educational outing.

▪ Wellness Hikes

Many kids and adults spend too much time behind a desk, watching TV, playing video games or staring at computer screens. Wellness hikes help you and your family get out and get moving. They are a perfect opportunity to explore Scottsdale's Preserve, and many are designed for hikers who are just getting started. Amazing views add to your sense of well-being and help you understand how lucky we are to have the Preserve available for all Valley citizens. Conservancy volunteer stewards lead these hikes throughout the Preserve.

▪ Holiday-Themed Hikes

The fall season brings holidays and lots of delicious food. Join us in the Preserve for a little holiday-oriented fun and work off that extra piece of pumpkin pie too. Holiday hikes include "Boo-jada," a fun Halloween hike on the Preserve's barrier-free Bajada Nature Trail. Join us for a Thanksgiving "More Pie Please" hike on the Ringtail Loop. Get into the Christmas spirit with a "Mistletoe and Holly" hike on the newly opened Marcus Landslide Trail.

For more information on these hikes, check our website: www.mcdowellsonoran.org. 

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Photo by: S. Cullumber





Photos courtesy of DC Ranch

2012 Tour de Scottsdale

By Jace McKeighan
McDowell Sonoran Conservancy Steward and
DC Ranch Resident

The 9th annual Tour de Scottsdale returns on October 14 at 6:30 a.m. to bring awareness to the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy. The Tour is also one of the Conservancy's major fundraising events. Last year, the event raised \$12,000 for the Conservancy, and since the event began, we have received about \$65,000. These funds are used for our continued stewardship of the Preserve.

The Tour is also a great example of partnering with our neighbors, in this case the DC Ranch community. One of the Conservancy's most valued relationships is with DC Ranch and the Tour. DC Ranch staff and residents organize and volunteer for Tour activities. The Tour takes a team effort, and the DC Ranch team is a vital component to the Tour's success.

With the assistance of DC Ranch, the Tour de Scottsdale is committed to promoting the work of the Conservancy's more than 400 volunteer stewards and their efforts of education, research, advocacy, partnerships and safe, respectful access to one of the most diverse desert ecosystems in the United States — the McDowell Mountains and Sonoran Desert. The Conservancy will provide more than 200 volunteers for the event, and for that service will receive \$8 per rider. We encourage all Conservancy supporters to consider either riding in the Tour or volunteering.



This year's Tour will include the traditional 70-mile citizens' ride. As a result of last year's overwhelmingly positive response to the 30-mile Tour de Scottsdale, the 30-mile ride will be making a return appearance. Registration and packet pickup for both rides are scheduled for October 13 from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. at DNA Cycles' satellite location across from the plaza on Market Street at DC Ranch, on the southeast corner of Thompson Peak Parkway and Pima Road. On race day, parking opens at

4 a.m. for the 6:30 a.m. start time. Last-minute packets and registration will be available beginning at 5 a.m.

When we visit the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, we take so much for granted. We assume that the trails will be in good condition, that stewards will be there to assist us, that we will glimpse native wildlife from time to time, and that the Preserve will be protected for tomorrow, for next year, and for the next generation.

But these things do not just happen. They require our consideration, our time and sometimes our money. DC Ranch and the Tour de Scottsdale are important components of that formula. We encourage you to support this great event and the Conservancy. 🐦

Jace McKeighan is a volunteer steward with the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy, is a DC Ranch resident and is the managing partner in the Scottsdale law firm of Dicarolo Caserta McKeighan & Phelps PLC.

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... by returning the membership form below.

<input type="checkbox"/> McDowell Sonoran Society (\$1,500+)	<input type="checkbox"/> Trailbuilder Circle (\$500)	<input type="checkbox"/> Caretaker Circle (\$250)
<input type="checkbox"/> Steward Circle (\$1,000)	<input type="checkbox"/> Hiker Circle (\$50)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Pathfinder Circle (\$100)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Please charge my credit card	<input type="checkbox"/> 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



16435 North Scottsdale Road
Suite 110
Scottsdale, Arizona 85254

Get the latest McDowell Sonoran
Conservancy info at:



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Walk, Run & Roll . . . As a Family!

Want to come and cheer on your friends and family as they finish the Tour de Scottsdale, but need something to do while they are riding? Bring your kids or grandkids and join the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy at the Walk, Run & Roll, held in conjunction with the Tour de Scottsdale on Sunday, October 14, 2012. Starting at 7 a.m., walkers, runners and bikers can choose a 1-mile or 3-mile course that weaves through the DC Ranch Community and showcases the beautiful desert landscape of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. Be sure to grab a map at the check-in table for the desert scavenger hunt! At the finish, visit Conservancy Nature Guides as they challenge your Arizona and desert history in a trivia game and other fun activities, or get up-close and personal with wildlife, decorate your bike at the Style Your Spokes station and so much more! A \$20 donation per family is suggested to support the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy kid's programming. Register at www.mcdowellsonoran.org or call 480-998-7971, ext. 101.

Photo courtesy of DC Ranch

