



# The Preserver

January 2013

*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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## From the Office of the Executive Director



Mike Nolan

Happy New Year! It's great to see some of our seasonal stewards back in town after the holidays and active again for the winter.

Every year more things are happening and more opportunities are available for you to get involved with the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy and to learn about the Preserve. You'll read about some of these opportunities in this issue,

and I hope you'll find time to participate. Our steward programs just get better and better.

One of the projects underway is the creation of the interpretive panels that will be installed on the building walls at the Brown's Ranch trailhead, currently under construction off the north end of Alma School Road. The Conservancy has committed to creating the interpretive signs, which will focus on the human history of the land that now makes up the Preserve.

A new MSC committee, called the Sonoran Desert Women, is raising money for these and other interpretive signs, a video display that will present stories about the Preserve, and for an exhibit room and

display cases at the trailhead that will host changing historical exhibits. They are working with the Pastfinders, a group of stewards within our McDowell Sonoran Field Institute interested in history, to conceive and create the stories that will relate the history. Led by Steward Len Marcisz, committee members and staff have already begun developing the content for the first signs, which may appear as early as late spring.

You'll have an opportunity to hear Len speak about the history of Brown's Ranch at the next Steward retreat on January 26. He's one of several speakers that morning who will give you a more in-depth perspective of the Preserve and work MSC Stewards are currently undertaking. I encourage you to attend this retreat at the DC Ranch Homestead. (See more information on the next page of this newsletter.)

If you plan to attend the retreat, please RSVP to Nancy Heck ([nancy@mcdowellsonoran.org](mailto:nancy@mcdowellsonoran.org)) so we have an idea of how many are coming when we set up the space. Thank you for all you do for MSC, and I'm looking forward to a fun season ahead of us.

# Volunteer Support Presents the Winter Retreat

by Rich Cochran, Steward and Steward Retreat Lead

The Steward Winter Retreat will take place at The Homestead on **Saturday, January 26, 2013, from 9 to 11 am**. The focus of this retreat will be steward education. The program is planned to provide stewards with information that will increase their knowledge about the Preserve and the Conservancy.

With the upcoming opening of the Brown's Ranch Trailhead in mind, Master Steward Len Marcisz will present a history of this ranch, one of the largest in the vicinity of the McDowell Mountains. He will also discuss some of the interesting and unconventional people who called it home.

Melanie Tluczek, Research Coordinator, will describe how the Field Institute fits into the overall picture of the Preserve and provide information regarding the most significant research findings from the past year. Stewards will also learn about the Field Institute's plans for the coming year, such as the Citizen Science Program and the Resource Management Plan.

Elif Affan, a member of the marketing committee, will give an overview of the Conservancy's digital marketing plan, from reviewing the accomplishments of the new website to how stewards can help drive awareness of the Conservancy by supplying or publishing content on MSC's social media channels. She will talk about how we are using social media in all aspects of our marketing, from advertising hikes to recruiting new stewards to educating the public. You'll hear how you can use Facebook, Meet-up, our blog post, and website to enhance our work and have fun.

Jacques Giard, steward education lead, will present recent changes in steward education, particularly those involving New Steward Orientation.

Light breakfast items, coffee, tea and juice will be provided.

**Mark your calendars and make plans to attend this informative event!**

## Volunteer Support Holiday Party a Success!



by Peggy McNamara, Steward

In December, Volunteer Support hosted a holiday party at the Homestead Community Center. The tables and hall, adorned in seasonal décor, set the mood for the evening. One-hundred-forty steward revelers and their guests (the most ever!) attended the event. Many wore their festive attire. Everyone enjoyed good food, drink, music and photographs while visiting with old friends and making some new friends. To round out the evening, Volunteer Support staff hosted a raffle of some very special gifts donated for the occasion. Barry White, Don Bierman, and Robert Grebe each donated a beautiful, large photograph taken in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. These matted and framed works went to three lucky ticket holders. Three other guests each won one of the three Arizona Highways books donated by Win Holden at Arizona Highways and obtained by Tom Heideman. The last two gifts, a daypack and a pair of hiking poles donated by REI, went to the final two winners.

# Board Information and Update

by Tom Headley, Board of Directors Chair

As you will remember, the first of a series of articles that describe various parts of the Board of Director's (BOD) organization and operation was in one of Mike's recent Thursday emails along with the announcement that the future articles would be included in upcoming issues of *The Preserver*. That article provided an overview of the BOD and, if you missed it, click [here](#).

This article and each of the articles in the next four issues will cover two of the BOD's ten committees, five of which are required by the Conservancy's bylaws and five of which are *ad hoc* committees. This month we will cover the Strategic Planning Committee and the McDowell Sonoran Field Institute Planning Committee because both are starting their work this month. BOD members, non-BOD member stewards and interested members of the public can participate as members of these committees.

## Strategic Planning Committee

Chair: Jack McEnroe, Steward and Vice Chair of the BOD

The purpose of the strategic plan is to outline the direction and objectives for MSC over a three-year period. The current strategic plan has four main sections:

- \* Operational Excellence – Activities that Sustain the Preserve which covers the growth and strengthening of the Steward program, MSC's financial stability and our relationship with the City of Scottsdale.
- \* Expertise in Sonoran Desert Stewardship, which covers the growing activities of the McDowell Sonoran Field Institute.
- \* Broaden and Deepen Community Support which covers activities to build public awareness of MSC in the community so we are better able to recruit new Stewards, to raise our required operating funds and to gain the support of voters when advocacy is required.

- \* Export Expertise which covers the possibility of helping other organizations several years from now.

Each year the Strategic Planning Committee reviews the plan and proposes updates and revisions to the BOD which then approves the plan. This year, the Strategic Planning Committee will begin its work in January and conclude its work near the end of March in time for the annual budgeting cycle. The strategic plan is one of the principal considerations as each year's budget and specific objectives are formulated and approved. The committee will have five to seven members. If you have interest in being a committee member, please let Mike Nolan or Steve Dodd know.

## McDowell Sonoran Field Institute Planning Committee

Chair: Kevin Tripp, Steward and BOD member

The McDowell Sonoran Field Institute (MSFI) has made great strides over the past few years. The scientific and historical studies completed and underway are amazing and provide us with much more knowledge about the Preserve than we have ever had. MSC will use this knowledge to further the stewardship of the Preserve for this and future generations.

It is now time to build on the good work of the past and set up a framework to ensure the future success of the MSFI. With that in mind, the charter of the McDowell Sonoran Field Institute Planning Committee is to recommend a structure for MSFI for the next few years. The Committee will recommend goals, staff levels and type, potential collaborator groups, a broad outline of potential areas of study and potential sources of financing.

The conclusions of the committee will be presented to the BOD for review and adoption. The committee will have five to seven members. If you have interest in being a committee member, please let Mike Nolan or Steve Dodd know.

# Steward Education Report: Important Changes for 2013

*By Jacques Giard, Steward and Steward Education Chair*

Many of you have probably heard rumors about pending changes to the New Steward Orientation (NSO). The big news is that we are introducing a one-day NSO beginning in January. Before these same rumors get out of hand, as they are prone to do, let me provide you with a few important highlights by way of a few key questions I have heard:

***"A one-day NSO? When I did my training it took 10 to 12 evenings?"***

***"What's going on? How can you go from a two-day to a one-day program?"***

***"Will the new stewards be as well trained as we were?"***

I have all of these questions and more. Fear not, the content for the NSO remains essentially the same, but instead of offering it over 10 to 12 evenings or over two half days as we have done in the past few years, we will now offer it in one day, albeit a longer day. In other words, we have compressed the time commitment into one day.

***"And you did this without removing any content from the NSO?"***

We have included all the information deemed to be critical to new steward training. That said, we did drop one session – a one-hour hike at Gateway. Our post-NSO surveys of new stewards showed that this hike had few benefits. And we no longer offer short versions of flora, fauna, geology, and ecology preferring that stewards-in-training (SITs) attend our courses on the same topic. We also edited all slide presentations shown at the NSO, both to streamline their content and to delete information that was repetitive.

***"Why go from two days to one? What were the reasons?"***

We need more stewards and we need to be as inviting as possible when recruiting them. On that note, we have heard from several sources that a two-day commitment is too onerous for some potential stewards. This is the case for bikers and equestrians, and we need both. At present, SITs are spending two half-days over two different Saturdays. It is our belief that dedicating only one day is a more reasonable time commitment for SITs.

***"What else are you doing to recruit more stewards?"***

This question has been on our minds for some time especially with the recent land acquisitions. In order to offer more opportunities to train stewards as well as to create greater consistency, NSOs will now be offered every second Saturday of every month during our normal hiking season. Moreover, we will be offering most NSOs at Gateway. Again, this is being done for the purpose of consistency.

***"Why make these changes?"***

All of you know that we need to train more stewards. To do so effectively, we need to find a compromise between two worlds: make the NSO as efficient as possible and remove any disincentives to potential stewards.

***"Rumor has it that you are also toying with other changes. Is that true?"***

Yes, and there are a few notable ones. First, the passport as you knew it no longer exists. It has been replaced with a document (with no name as yet) that helps mentors and mentees plan a course of action towards earning a total of 20 hours. Only then does the SIT become a steward. The second change is awarding of the blue shirt upon graduation from the NSO. This action was taken to enhance retention. That said, the SIT's badge will continue to state 'steward in training' until the aforementioned 20 hours have been met. A third change is to have SITs learn how to login at the NSO and not at the office. This will allow the SITs to record hours immediately upon graduation. Lastly, we have reduced the cost to \$35.

***"Here we go again, making changes without consultation. Who was involved in these changes?"***

Many people were involved directly in these changes. As CLT chair, Steve Dodd was involved, of course. Others from the CLT included Marsha Lipps, Paul Staker, and John Cassidy. Mike Nolan and Jill Feinstein represented Conservancy staff. And then there were many suggestions that several of you made to me directly.

When considering changes I am often reminded of an old Chinese saying, "When the winds of change come, some people build walls; others build windmills." I see the Conservancy as builders of windmills.



# Construction and Maintenance Activities

by Paul Staker, Steward and C&M Chair

As always, the Construction & Maintenance (C&M) program continues to evolve to meet the needs of the ever-growing Preserve. Two significant changes have impacted the types of projects that have appeared on the C&M calendar this season:

- The number of trail maintenance projects on the schedule has increased. Although our trails continue to be in excellent condition overall, many of them receive a significant amount of use that results in gradual deterioration over time. Due to competing priorities including the opening of the Tom's Thumb trailhead, trail maintenance had slipped a little with negative effects beginning to appear in some areas. We have started a more aggressive program of prioritizing and scheduling an increased number of maintenance projects.
- Projects working with corporations and other large groups have always been a major component of the C&M calendar. In addition to the work accomplished by these groups, these projects are excellent ways to share the MSC story with key members of the community and to recruit new stewards. However, it has always been difficult to find meaningful activities for these larger groups since many of our normal projects are difficult to manage with a large number of inexperienced volunteers.

Therefore, the City of Scottsdale staff, the MSC staff and C&M leadership have worked together to try to identify meaningful projects that can work well with larger groups and then to schedule them on the calendar for the entire season based on the highest priority needs. Many of the corporate projects this year are scheduled in the Tom's Thumb area as there are many opportunities to cover over the old roads and other motorized vehicle use that existed in the area prior to construction of the new trailhead.

Further out, we expect that a significant portion of C&M activities will begin to shift to the recently

purchased area north of Dynamite. We have recently completed the installation of Preserve signage and repair of fencing along 136<sup>th</sup> Street, most of which was part of the most recent land acquisition in November. In addition, there are currently approximately 300 miles of trail in this area, several times the mileage that exists in the established areas of the Preserve in the McDowells.



*Stewards on C&M project*

Many of these northern area trails have been created by the various users of this region, including motorized dirt bikers, mountain bikers and equestrians. The City of Scottsdale is currently developing its final trail plan, but it's likely that the official map will end up with about half as many miles. The trails to be eliminated will need to be closed off, while the remaining trails may need upgrading to the standards that have been established. Some of this work will be done by outside contractors hired by the city, but there is expected to be the need for many steward projects as well. The exact timetable has not been set, but it is expected that this work will begin sometime in 2013.

As always, all stewards are welcome to come out and see what the C&M program has to offer. The objective is to provide a safe and enjoyable experience, while knowing that the work we do benefits the Preserve we all love.

# MSC Introduces the “Fit by Nature” Program

*By Jace McKeighan, Steward*



The ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus is credited with saying that “the only constant is change.” This is certainly true for the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy.

One of the biggest changes for 2013 is the introduction of the Conservancy’s “Fit by Nature” program which, as you may have heard, has replaced the McDowell Sonoran Challenge for 2013. The new program represents our year-round commitment to fitness activities within the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, and furthers the Conservancy’s goal of connecting the community to the Preserve. The program is sponsored by Oliver Smith Jeweler, a long-time supporter of the Conservancy.

Fit by Nature is MSC’s free fitness community that includes on-site and online resources, as well as access to information about fitness, recreational and educational opportunities within the Preserve. The program is highlighted by the 2013 Fitness Challenge.

The goal is to bike, hike, or run 100 miles or every marked trail in the Preserve and experience how nature can positively affect your daily well-being. An

online leader board will allow you to track your progress and compare it to that of others. For those with a competitive nature, the top three finishers in each category will receive an award.

If you prefer shorter term goals, the Days on the Dirt Challenge began on January 1 and will continue through March 31 of this year. The goal is to bike, hike or run in the Preserve on at least 15 different days. You can track your progress online at [www.MSCfit.org](http://www.MSCfit.org) and, once you finish, download a certificate to take and redeem for a prize at the Gateway Trailhead (besides the priceless sense of accomplishment that you will receive).

The Fit by Nature program is designed to help you succeed. Extensive maps and route information will make planning your outings and setting your goals easy. MSC will sponsor clinics and experiences until March 31 to teach you techniques for exercising within the Preserve and to improve your training. These events will be announced on the MSC and the Fit by Nature websites. Space may be limited, so we recommend that you register as early as possible. Fit by Nature will help you get to peak performance, and to the peaks of the Preserve as well.

As you can see, we are very excited about this new program. We hope that Fit by Nature will inspire you to enjoy the Preserve more than ever in the new year. You can learn more at [www.mcdowellsonoran.org](http://www.mcdowellsonoran.org), as well as at the new program site [www.MSCfit.org](http://www.MSCfit.org). See you on the trails.

# McDowell Sonoran Field Institute Report

By Melanie Tluczek, Research Coordinator

## What does it mean to be a citizen scientist?

Many stewards, both with the Field Institute and with other programs, have asked me this question since I took the job of research coordinator last summer. I tell them that citizen science is the bedrock of the Field Institute; it is how our research gets done. We also want being a citizen scientist to be an educational and inspirational experience for those involved. Our volunteers are stewards, students, and other community members. They do everything from photographing birds to publishing scientific papers. They may volunteer for only one day, or be an integral part of the everyday operations of the Field Institute.

## But this still leaves the question, what makes one a citizen scientist?

The Field Institute is a unique organization, and must define this role in its own unique way. On November 17, 2012 we attempted to do this at our second research meeting. The central idea that emerged from our collective attempt was that of learning. Everyone agreed that some amount of background knowledge should be required to be considered a citizen scientist. This should include both natural history and scientific procedures. Hands-on learning is important as well. Many of us know that it is one thing to read about the Sonoran Desert, and an entirely different thing to experience it. The same is true with scientific procedure, in our case, ecological fieldwork and its products.

The last component of learning is that of information exchange. Engaging in citizen science provides access to educational resources, such as the opportunity to work directly with scientists. At the same time, citizen scientists are gaining knowledge that will benefit others. In our case, it will benefit the Preserve by helping us improve our management efforts.

As a result of this meeting, we developed a set of criteria to define a Field Institute citizen scientist. A citizen scientist is someone who has participated in a number of our surveys, gained a broad ecological knowledge of the Preserve, and developed an understanding of the basic concepts of scientific data collection. A citizen scientist acquires this experience by becoming a steward, participating in research activities, taking the Conservancy's Natural History course, and completing the new citizen science training course.

We also have many other volunteers who work with us, whether it is for a day or whether they choose to participate in only one aspect of the Field Institute. All contribute to our work in important ways, and are a necessary part of the research program. Creating this definition is a step toward increasing the educational and leadership opportunities within the Field Institute, as well as developing a sense of unity and identity. If you are interested in volunteering with the Field Institute or becoming a citizen scientist, please contact Melanie Tluczek at

[Melanie@mcdowellsonoran.org](mailto:Melanie@mcdowellsonoran.org)



*Stevan Earl, an ASU professor, training a group of Field Institute volunteers to set pitfall traps in order to study the insect life of the Preserve*

# Patrol Report: Hunting in the Preserve

by Bobby Alpert, Master Steward and Patrol Chair

Recently I've received many emails regarding hunting in the Preserve. Instead of answering individually, I have reproduced the official fact sheet for *Hunting in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve* below. Remember, this is regulated by Arizona Game and Fish ([www.azgfd.gov](http://www.azgfd.gov)), not the City of Scottsdale. Please send your comments directly to Arizona Game and Fish.

## Hunting in the Scottsdale McDowell Sonoran Preserve

Discharge of firearms and hunting with firearms are prohibited in the Scottsdale McDowell Sonoran Preserve.

### Hunting in the Scottsdale McDowell Sonoran Preserve

- Preserve rules and regulations must be followed, including:
  - Preserve hours: sunrise to sunset
  - No motor vehicles
  - Access and parking only in designated areas
  - Hunters (actively hunting) permitted off-trail to pursue and retrieve game.
- Trapping is prohibited.
- Preserve open for over-the-counter archery deer, javelina, and mountain lion (need tag)
  - 2012/2013 Deer (antlered) season: December 14, 2012 through January 31, 2013
  - 2013 Javelina season: January 1, 2013 through January 24, 2013
  - 2012/2013 Mountain lion season: July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013
- Preserve open to reptile/amphibian collecting with hand-held implement only. Firearms may not be used for reptile collection while in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve.
  - 2013 Reptile/Amphibian Season: January 1, 2013 through December 31, 2013

### Hunting on State Trust Land

- Individuals with a current Arizona Game and Fish Hunt License may legally hunt on State Trust Land (the hunting license acts as a State Land Permit while actively hunting).
- Target shooting is a violation of the terms of the issued State Trust Land Recreation Permit. If a user violates the terms of the issued permit, the permit becomes void and the user is considered trespassing and subject to possible citation under ARS 37-501. Target shooting is also prohibited on all Preserve land.
- State Trust Land in the Granite Mountain Area lies outside of the "No Hunting Boundary Map" and will be open for archery deer, javelina and mountain lion seasons. It will also be open to dove, quail, cottontail rabbit and predator furbearer seasons with shotguns shooting shot.
- Hunters participating in seasons with shotguns shooting shot must not discharge a firearm within 1/4 mile of an occupied structure.

For a map of the hunting and no-hunting areas, click [here](#).



# Partners on Patrol

*By Peggy McNamara, Steward*

So you thought patrolling was going on a good hike and being alert for the occasional off-leash dog. Well, read about how seasoned patroller, Master Steward Joni Millavec, took patrol coaching to a new level when she took new steward, Judi Krolikowski, on a patrol of the Quartz Trail. Joni showed Judy how a patroller is proactive in protecting the Preserve through a deeper understanding of how desert life works.

Judy was so delighted with her experience that she told Bobby Alpert, Master Steward and Patrol Chair, about what she learned. Here is what Judi had to say.

- ♦ I watched as Joni explained when to cut overhanging branches and brush, and where to make the cuts.
- ♦ I found out when you should kick a loose rock off the trail and when you should leave it alone.
- ♦ I saw Joni identify an invasive plant and listened while she explained why disturbing it now would spread the seeds too far. Joni said it should be cut at a different time of the year. She explained that Claire Miller, the Preserve Manager who is certified in safely using herbicides, might also treat the cut trunk to kill the plant.
- ♦ I found out about berms along the trail.
- ♦ I learned when you might need to kick some of the rock toward the center of the trail, when you should report a hole in the trail, and when you might decide that erosion wasn't severe enough to warrant a complicated repair.
- ♦ I saw Joni identify eroded areas of the trail, photograph them, and note the GPS location.
- ♦ I watched as she downloaded data from a trail counter.
- ♦ I listened as she talked to a geocacher about Preserve rules.
- ♦ I listened as she gave directions to a bicyclist about a trail that suited his abilities.



*Steward Judi Krolikowski and Master Steward Joni Millavec*

- ♦ I saw her identify a baby cactus that might have to be moved to a location farther from the trail.
- ♦ I heard about plants and animals that are sometimes seen on the trails.
- ♦ I learned about trail Construction and Maintenance.

Judy concludes by saying, "I learned a lot!! I would love to go on more patrols."

In Judy's words we can see how great it is to get out into the desert and really BE in the desert. Being guided by an enthusiastic, knowledgeable friend, like Joni was an important part of Judy's great experience.

Reajean Fellows, Steward and Team Lead for Volunteer Support, states, "This is fine example of an exceptional teaching and learning experience. Judy will make a great patroller. Joni is a great teacher and incredibly knowledgeable. This wonderful one-on-one learning experience was made special by Joni's very detailed coaching. This is something we want to repeat over and over again with others."

# Meet Steward Stuart Wolkoff

by Peggy McNamara, Steward

Like a number of stewards, Stuart Wolkoff was born, raised, and educated in Chicago. But after graduating with a BS in Business Administration from Roosevelt University, he left to serve in the United States Marine Corps for six years. Upon completing his service, he returned to Chicago in 1968 and started a business. Stuart's company began small, producing a folding stadium seat imprinted with sport logos. Over time he gained two partners, and the company grew to house multiple sports-related product lines. During the 1990s, the company grew by 300%!

During these busy years, Stuart also raised three children. Now he has four granddaughters - all living in Chicago. It goes without saying that Stuart is a regular visitor to the Windy City.

When Stuart first visited Arizona in 1996, he was on a business trip. He hiked in the Preserve and fell in love with the Sonoran desert. After that, Stuart made regular visits to Scottsdale. When he retired from his company in March of 2010, it was natural for him to move here. He had decided by then that Arizona had better weather than Chicago!

Since moving here, Stuart has hiked just about every trail in the Preserve. Now that Tom's Thumb and Marcus Landslide trails are open, he's been enjoying hiking in the north area.

Soon after moving here, Stuart was hiking one of the trails originating at the Gateway Trailhead and came upon some "blue shirts" working along the trail. He asked them what they were doing and if he could help. The next thing he knew, he was graduating with Class 26, the Marathoners! Becoming a steward has given him great opportunities to make new friends, learn new skills and give back to his new community.

Now Stuart is very active in New Steward Orientation. Starting with Class 27, he has helped to organize and set up each class venue. He also works in Pathfinders, Patrol, Nature Guides, and sometimes in Construction & Maintenance. If there's time left over, he volunteers at the Musical Instrument Museum.



*Steward Stuart Wolkoff*

This busy man even has a job working part-time at the new Restoration Hardware Gallery in the Scottsdale Quarter. Oh yes, and here's a bit of information that you might find useful sometime. If you need last minute help at an event, Stuart is your go-to-guy!

Of everything Stuart does for the Conservancy, he has probably had the most fun working as a Nature Guide. This past spring, he assisted Judy Irons with a kindergarten hike. It was so much fun that he returned for the first and second grade hikes! He says, "It's a sure bet that I'll be back to lend a hand with more Nature Guide hikes."