

Protecting
a Living
Treasure

McDowell Sonoran
Conservancy

2009-2010 Annual Report

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Strengthening our
Community

Ruthie Carll, Executive Director

As we complete our 19th year, MSC staff, volunteers, donors, and supporters continue to work together to strengthen our community through the protection of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve.

During the 2009-2010 fiscal year, MSC focused on stewardship; public awareness and outreach; educational resources, hikes, and youth activities in the living classrooms of the Preserve; and monitoring and assessment of the ecological integrity of the land. We have become a dynamic organization of more than 450 trained volunteer Stewards who have collectively devoted more than 180,000 hours of their time to the Preserve making the public/private partnership with the City of Scottsdale (COS) a national model for conservation. Although COS owns the land of the Preserve, through an agreement between COS and MSC approved in December, 2009 MSC agreed to provide many support responsibilities for the Preserve.

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McDowell Sonoran Conservancy is a 501 (c) (3) organization.

Following national volunteer management models, we provide the highest standards of training and continuing education to ensure highly engaged and educated citizen volunteers. Stewards patrolled trails, restored damaged desert habitat, and removed invasive plants to discourage the threat of wildfires. We educated young people and the general public about the wonders of the Preserve. We advocated for safe enjoyment of the Preserve. And in 2009, Stewards helped create, and will be interpreting, the award-winning Bajada Nature Trail, an outdoor living museum located at the Gateway to the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. Over this past year, MSC Stewards contributed more than 42,500 hours of service to the city of Scottsdale, a value of more than \$880,000 based on the 2009 *Bureau of Labor Statistics* value of contributed service of \$20.85 per hour.

Protection of natural areas within a city, like the McDowell Sonoran Preserve in the City of Scottsdale, can have a profound effect on the entire community. The Preserve provides great views to help relieve stresses of living in this urban setting. The Preserve provides space for outdoor recreation and environmental education. It provides habitat that protects biodiversity. This unique open space provides some people with a sense of freedom and others with a sense of solitude and inspiration.

MSC is committed to protecting the Preserve so that the community can experience the natural beauty of this living treasure, and encouraging the community to discover all that the Preserve has to offer.

Please take a few moments to review our annual report. We hope it leaves you feeling proud of what we were able to accomplish together and eager to participate in our future.

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

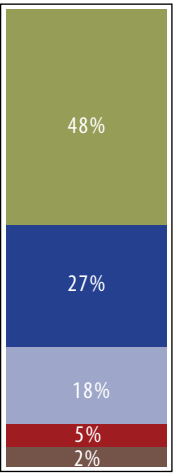


STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

FISCAL YEAR: JULY 1, 2009–JUNE 30, 2010
(with comparative totals for 2009)

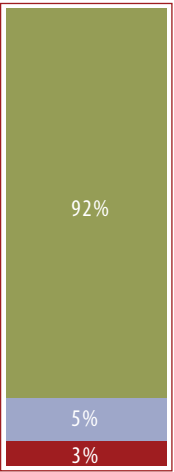
	JUNE 2010	JUNE 2009
Current Assets		
Cash	\$324,214	\$372,926
Receivables	\$117,738	\$76,536
Other Assets	\$7,224	\$16,517
Fixed Assets	\$555,698	\$557,433
Total Assets	\$1,004,874	\$1,023,412

Current Liabilities	\$8,661	\$10,379
Net Assets	\$996,213	\$1,013,033
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$1,004,874	\$1,023,412



REVENUE AND SUPPORT

In kind Donations	\$ 96,769	5%
Contributed Property	\$496,649	27%
Contributed Service	\$882,622	48%
Cash and Pledges	\$322,672	18%
Program Revenue	\$9,520	1%
Investments	\$18,281	1%
Less loss on events	(\$1,251)	
Total Revenue	\$1,825,262	



EXPENSES

Program Expenses	\$1,700,096	92%
Fundraising Expenses	\$95,581	5%
General Expenses	\$46,405	3%
Total Expenses	\$1,842,082	



Protecting a Living Treasure

Explore

About 250,000 community members explored the Preserve this past year, and MSC was there to help guide them. Public hikes in the Preserve were well attended, with 2,035 participants enjoying 72 guided experiences every Saturday and Sunday from October, 2009-June, 2010, and on many other special hikes offered during the week for groups such as Preserve Connections, seniors, schools and other youth groups. Stewards interpreted what the participants found along the trails, ranging from holes to wildflowers to rocks. Our Steward leaders educated hikers about how native peoples used desert plants for their food, shelter, rituals and medicine. Special themes this year included biomimicry, tai chi, photography, and exercise physiology. We held Tuesday hikes for those who like to hike during the week, and introduced them to the Preserve.

The McDowell Sonoran Preserve’s Bajada Nature Trail opened in September 2009 and was specifically designed and built for the enjoyment of all — from young children, to the elderly to those with physical challenges. The half-mile trail exceeds many ADA standards and offers an innovative, interactive nature experience for those who want to learn more about Arizona’s unique Sonoran Desert. Recently winning the Arizona Disability Advocacy Coalition’s ADA Title II – State and Local Government Justice and Equality Liberty Award, the trail has been utilized by more than 10,000 people in its first year.

The Family Friday Sunset Series provides an opportunity for families to share time together in the Preserve every Friday late afternoon in October and April. In 2009, we began to offer the program at the Gateway amphitheater and enjoyed tremendous growth in the number who attended, more than double any other year. Each week we were able to share the treasures of the Sonoran Desert and McDowell Mountains with hundreds of families whose children represented 33 schools from around the Valley. In 2011 we anticipate further growth and will begin to offer the program at both the Lost Dog Wash trailhead and the Gateway.



Discover

MSC works to share the natural beauty of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve in order to ensure that the Preserve is protected in perpetuity. In 2009, to achieve this goal and reach an audience who may not know the Preserve, we were very pleased to publish our first photography book. The powerful images in the book tell a story of the importance of the Preserve to our community, and the importance of open space to the world. Photographs included in these pages were taken by novices and experts alike, and from those who know MSC well and those who met us for the first time through the Focus on Conservation Photography Contest.

We originally created the photography contest to encourage people who might otherwise never visit the Preserve —those who do not regularly enjoy hiking, biking, trail running, rock climbing or horse riding— to enjoy and photograph the beauty of the Preserve easily found on even a short walk along the many Preserve trails. The 2010 Photography Contest had three divisions: youth, amateur and advanced. It also offered a wide range of categories for submissions, affording an opportunity for every interest to be explored and expressed. These categories were: Seasons, Digital Art, Macro, Plants & Animals, People, and Landscapes & Geology. We had an overwhelming response, with more than 1,000 entries!

Also in this past year, MSC shared our commitment to the Preserve with more than 10,000 people at outreach events and expos, through presentations and a library lecture series, and through collaborations with local businesses.



Protect

MSC Stewards spent more than 6,000 hours throughout the year patrolling the Preserve on foot, bike, horseback and while rock climbing. Patrol reports were sent weekly, and often, immediately, to the City of Scottsdale Preservation Department. These patrol efforts are critical to the maintenance and health of the Preserve as evidenced by the minimal damage to the Preserve caused by the wildfire in April, 2010. The fire, which began just west of the Tom’s Thumb’s access area, was sighted by a MSC steward on patrol and the immediate report resulted in an effective and coordinated response by MSC, the City of Scottsdale and the Scottsdale Fire Department. The fire did not spread to surrounding neighborhoods and damaged only 80 acres of Preserve land.

MSC Pathfinders serve an important role in the Preserve acting as trailhead hosts. They volunteer at the trailhead, often near a Preserve map, in order to answer questions about the trails and other Preserve-related topics. Pathfinders work from October into the beginning of May at Sunrise, Lost Dog Wash and Gateway trailheads. This year they spent 2,234 hours assisting more than 53,000 visitors! Their work promotes safe enjoyment of the Preserve, encouraging people to stay on trails and keep their dogs on leash. This work helps ensure that the public’s use will not damage the fragile habitat in the Preserve.

MSC stewards, under the direction of the City of Scottsdale Preserve Managers, coordinated work projects to build and repair hiking trails, remove invasive weeds, and remediate the habitat. Of the 4,093 hours worked, 20% was completed by our Preservation Partners; employees from APS, Boeing, Henkel, Medtronic, Wells Fargo, Wespac and others volunteered their time and energy to lend a helping hand at the Gateway area work projects.

Our teen initiatives helped community teens develop the knowledge necessary to create environmental change in the community through their personal connection to the Preserve. They worked on community service projects such as Martin Luther King Day of Service, Global Youth Service Day, Earth Day, and National Trails Day.

A better understanding of the Preserve helps MSC and the city of Scottsdale protect the natural resources of the area. For instance, MSC volunteer Stewards conducted a geological research project in the Preserve working under the supervision of Brian Gootee, a research geologist with the Arizona Geological Survey, and the City of Scottsdale Preservation Division staff. Brian confirmed that an unusual rock outcropping in the McDowell Mountains within the McDowell Sonoran Preserve is travertine, a form of limestone. Limestone has not been identified previously in the McDowell Mountains or in the metro Phoenix area. Volunteers authored two contributed reports on this finding that were published by Arizona Geological Survey.



WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE OUR SUPPORTERS

(Gifts and pledges made from July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010)

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Although too numerous to list, we thank each one of the generous members of the Hiker Circle!