

The People's Preserve

How Scottsdale Created the McDowell Sonoran Preserve

by Joan C. Fudala

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How Scottsdale Created the McDowell Sonoran Preserve ... and saved a 1.8-billion-year-old treasure in less than 25 years

By Joan C. Fudala, community historian

Published by the City of Scottsdale, Arizona

In commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve
October 2014



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See: www.scottsdaleaz.gov/Preserve

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MORE TO EXPLORE
Sunrise Trailhead
Opened March 2005

City of Scottsdale photo

CHAPTER ONE

What's at Stake; Why a Preserve?

Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve is a place of majestic beauty, quiet solitude, abundant wildlife, ancient artifacts, exhilarating exercise and, most of all, community pride.

Who can resist its siren call? Moments of silence are broken by coyote howls, woodpecker knocks and breezes rustling the pods of a mesquite tree. A mosaic of color delights the eye – cactus green, cardinal red, granite gray, prickly pear purple, sky blue. Shapes, angles and contours of rock challenge the climber's imagination. Each season in the preserve entices us with new experiences – winter's cool, starry nights that occasionally illuminate snow-covered peaks; spring's balmy, blossom-fragrant breezes; summer's torrential downpours that cool the sizzling desert and bring a waft of creosote to the air; autumn's sunny, mild days so perfect for hiking. The preserve offers glimpses of history – petroglyphs created by the Hohokam people, discards of U.S. Cavalry soldiers and hopeful miners, the crumbling foundations of homesteaders, weathered cowboy gear. All of this makes up the magic of Scottsdale's Sonoran Desert and McDowell Mountains. This is what the citizens of Scottsdale voted five times to preserve and pay for with their sales tax dollars. This is what they see and experience today in all its splendor. This is what they promise to leave behind for their grandchildren and generations to come.

It was the potential spoilage of the beauty and desirability of living in and enjoying the McDowell Mountains and pristine Sonoran Desert that created a call to action. As Scottsdale – a world-renowned tourism destination, thriving business hub and magnet for an active outdoor lifestyle – continued to annex

land north from its townsite origins, it was only a matter of time before residential and commercial developments would encroach on the unblemished areas. While many area residents passively assumed that the McDowells would never be marred by development, others grew increasingly alarmed as the McDowells and desert lands farther north were zoned for subdivisions, roads, golf courses, strip malls and more. Still others – who had been 'politely trespassing' on

"If you foolishly ignore beauty, you'll soon find yourself without it. Your life will be impoverished. But if you wisely invest in beauty, it will remain with you all the days of your life."

Frank Lloyd Wright, who established Taliesin West/Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture on the foothills of the McDowell Mountains in 1937.

private or government-owned land in order to hike, climb, mountain bike, ride their horses or hunt – were concerned that their secret play land would soon be asphalted and red-tile-roofed away.

In an effort spanning more than four decades, thousands of Scottsdale people have devoted countless hours to ensuring the protection of this land, most notably by creating a small McDowell Sonoran Preserve in 1994, with a dream to make it a large-scale, connected open space corridor. Envisioned to be nearly

35,000 acres, or roughly 57 square miles, the “people’s preserve” comprises rugged mountains and adjoining high desert that has been and will be preserved in perpetuity as natural open space.

There were several legislative and well-meaning but ill-fated attempts in the 1970s and 1980s to preserve Scottsdale’s signature landmark, the McDowell Mountains. Sensing that the bulldozers were imminently set to roll, the citizen-driven non-profit McDowell Sonoran Land Trust (now known as the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy) brought a diverse group of advocates together in 1990. Together with the city of Scottsdale, the land trust spearheaded a successful preservation effort, creating the preserve in 1994, and successfully getting a sales tax increase passed by voters in May 1995 to fund expansion of the preserve.

Creating, expanding and enjoying the preserve has been a communitywide, grass-roots movement since day one. Its core has been a partnership among citizen groups, city of Scottsdale elected officials and professional staff, outdoor enthusiasts, state and federal elected officials and agencies’ staffs, the Scottsdale Convention & Visitors Bureau, the hospitality industry, the Scottsdale Area Chamber of Commerce, real estate developers, students, voters and everyone who’s paid a sales tax in Scottsdale since 1995. In the face of what seemed insurmountable odds and costs, they came together to make the dream come true.

Treasures within the McDowell Sonoran Preserve

- At least 25 mammal species, ranging from mule deer and javelina, to coyotes, bobcats and mountain lions
- Some 35 species of reptile and amphibian life, such as rattlesnakes, Gila monsters, king snakes and desert tortoises
- 128 identified species of birds, such as roadrunners, Gambel’s quail, cactus wrens, cardinals, mourning doves, Harris’s hawks, prairie falcons, vultures and great horned owls
- Cacti, such as saguaro, cholla, prickly pear, golden barrel and hedgehog
- Trees that include mesquite, ironwood, acacia and palo verde
- Geological wonders, such as mountain peaks soaring to 4,000 feet, deep canyons and wind-swept passes, weathered granite, quartz hills, distinctive boulder outcroppings, and features with imaginative names like Balanced Rock, Marcus Landslide, Tom’s Thumb, Windgate Pass and Lost Dog Wash
- Archaeological sites with petroglyphs, projectile points, pottery sherds and other evidence of ancient peoples living on or traveling the land
- Historic sites, such as Dixie Mine, Brown’s Ranch, DC Ranch and Frazier Spring

"I don't think we [in the tourism industry] knew how to leverage the desert [before the preserve was created]. We saw it as a beautiful, interesting thing where visitors liked to go to have an experience like horseback riding or going on a jeep ride – an activity that just happened to be in the desert. Things changed when we recognized that the desert was our ocean. We compete with other destinations around the globe that have beautiful natural elements, as we do. It is our geography that truly sets us apart....Now, all of our marketing and advertising programs lead with Scottsdale's being in the Sonoran Desert."

Rachel Sacco, president and CEO,
Scottsdale Convention & Visitors
Bureau since 1986

Tom's Thumb. City of Scottsdale photo.

Yellow blooms, photo by Joan Fudala; Hawk in flight at Gateway; Desert tortoise photo by City of Scottsdale.





MORE TO EXPLORE
Lost Dog Wash Trailhead
Opened May 2006

Chris Brown photo

CHAPTER TWO

Prelude to Preservation

Yes, Scottsdale's preserve movement kicked into high gear in 1990. But when did Scottsdale first begin to focus on preserving its 1.8 billion-year-old signature asset, the McDowell Mountain range and surrounding Sonoran Desert? When did the community start to change from expending the land and its resources to staunchly defending and preserving it?

History shows that people have always admired, even worshipped, Scottsdale's mountains and desert land. Petroglyphs left in the McDowells by the earliest inhabitants show their deep connection to nature – figures of deer, rabbits and snakes were etched into rock by ancient people. They paid homage to Mother Earth. Some archaeologists imagine that early inhabitants considered certain rock formations to be sacred places if they were naturally aligned and denoted the changing of seasons and the position of the sun and stars.

In the last two centuries, modern people have used desert and mountain lands surrounding what we now call Scottsdale, Arizona, in various ways, from farming and mining, to commercial development, road-building, outdoor recreation, and as a scenic backdrop for tourism. Since Chaplain Winfield Scott first homesteaded a section of land in 1888 that became the nucleus of Scottsdale, he and others have touted the area's warm, dry climate as curative, healthy and conducive to year-round exercise. Each generation since Scott's era has savored the natural beauty, open spaces and sunny climate of Scottsdale's mountains and desert, but the rush to make a life here has often irreparably damaged the previously undeveloped environment.

Although it is difficult to pinpoint exactly when citizens' environmental consciousness first awakened, Scottsdale took several meaningful steps toward land preservation, open space and natural resource stewardship in the early



Early settlers join Chaplain Winfield Scott (third from right) in a 1906 celebration of George Washington's Birthday. Scottsdale Historical Society photo.



Typical cattle drive of the 1930s, from ranches north of Scottsdale's town site to the stock yards near today's Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport. Scottsdale Historical Society photo.

1960s. To put that turning point into a broader context, a brief look back at Scottsdale history is helpful, particularly reviewing how people have claimed or used its land.

The Sonoran Desert region of central Arizona that includes the McDowell Mountain range and Scottsdale was undeveloped and unpopulated for millennia. Twentieth-century archaeologists have found evidence, however, that the Archaic people seasonally inhabited what is now Scottsdale and the McDowell Sonoran Preserve as early as 6,000 BCE. Studies suggest that the Upland Hohokam people lived in villages in the Pinnacle Peak area between 300 BCE and the 1400s CE, followed by a seasonal presence of the Yavapai people between the 1400s and 1700s. Ancestors of today's members of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community and the Fort McDowell Indian Community continued to live and travel over this land through the modern era.

"I leave to you my work in Scottsdale...If you take this work and do it, and enlarge it as God gives you strength, you will receive my blessing and His."

The Rev. Winfield Scott, Scottsdale's founder and namesake, in a letter to Scottsdale residents included in his will, October 1910

Over the past 500 years, governance of central Arizona has changed hands several times. In the 1500s, Spanish explorer Francisco Vázquez de Coronado claimed most of what is now the southwestern U.S. for Spain. When Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1821, "Arizona" became part of Mexico. The U.S. acquired the area of central Arizona (north of the Gila River) following the Mexican War (1845-48) through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. A New Mexico

Territory was created in 1861, combining what are now the two distinctive states, and the following year Jefferson Davis, the president of the Confederate States of America during the Civil War, claimed the area as part of the Confederacy. In February 1863 President Abraham Lincoln declared Arizona a separate territory.

Following the end of the Civil War in 1865, there was a rush to settle the western U.S., and several U.S. Army posts were established to protect new residents and businesses from warring Apaches. Fort McDowell opened in 1865 at the confluence of the Salt and Verde rivers, the first permanent modern-day settlement near the McDowell Mountains. Phoenix was established as a civilian hay camp for Fort McDowell in the 1870s, and the Salt River Valley flourished as an agricultural center. The Desert Land Act of 1877 encouraged settlement, increasing the amount of land allowable under the Homestead Act of 1862 from 160 acres to 640 acres. After W.J. Murphy completed construction of the Arizona Canal in 1885, which provided irrigation water for agriculture as it ran diagonally across the Salt River Valley, land along the canal was quickly bought by investors and farmers.

Major Winfield Scott, a U.S. Army chaplain, homesteaded a section of land along the eastern portion of the Arizona Canal in July 1888, and the settlement of Scottsdale slowly evolved into a small agricultural community east of Phoenix, north of Tempe and west of the sprawling Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community. Throughout Scottsdale's first six decades, it remained an unincorporated farming and ranching village, centered in what is now downtown Scottsdale. A few cattle and sheep ranches were established north of the village. The largest – Brown's Ranch/DC Ranch, established by E.O. Brown and partners in 1916 – eventually encompassed some 44,000 acres of grazing land on the western flank of the McDowells and further north. Scottsdale residents focused on their crops, livestock and small-town lifestyle, and thrived as a close-knit community. Townsfolk adapted to living in the desert without modern amenities or municipal infrastructure. Law enforcement, zoning and a few other services were provided by Maricopa County. Scottsdale property owners avoided incorporation or annexation into adjacent cities and towns, fearing urbanization and growth. From its earliest days, Scottsdale was a participatory community. In 1896, Scottsdale residents built the town's first wooden schoolhouse. It also became a place to gather for worship and holiday celebrations and to help each other in times of need.

While Scottsdale residents concentrated on raising crops, cattle and children, Arizona gained statehood as the 48th state in February 1912. Winter visitors and health seekers discovered the Scottsdale area, and several seasonal resorts, guest ranches and health camps opened in the 1910s through 1930s. Artists

“Our growth and development should proceed with clear awareness of the impact on our rare and beautiful environment. The desert atmosphere is a gift of nature that needs careful nurturing.”

Scottsdale Shared Vision Report, May 1993, in describing one of four dominant themes identified by Scottsdale residents as vital to the city's future: the Sonoran Desert



Janie and Michael Ellis playing on a desert boulder, 1940s. Janie Ellis collection.

found Scottsdale an inexpensive and inspirational place to create their works. Famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright established his winter home and school of architecture, Taliesin West, on the remote and undeveloped southwestern foothills of the McDowell Mountains. A pilot training base opened north of town, which provided basic flight skills to 5,500 aviation cadets during World War II.

During Scottsdale's farming and ranching decades, the McDowell Mountains – mostly state and federally-owned land – were considered a remote and beautiful backdrop to the town, and a place for occasional adventures. Children and grandchildren of E.O. and E.E. Brown spent fun-filled weekends and summers at Brown's Ranch (the Upper Ranch) and DC Ranch (the Lower Ranch) horseback riding into the McDowells, swimming in the cattle tanks and joshing with the authentic cowboys who worked on the cattle ranch. During the 1930s, guests at the Jokake Inn on Camelback Road, as well as students at the Jokake School for Girls, took overnight trips on horseback to the remote Jokake Desert Camp, very near where Mayo Clinic Arizona stands today on East Shea Boulevard. Phoenix attorney K.T. Palmer homesteaded land on the north side of Pinnacle Peak in 1933 and moved his wife and three children to the site. Together they learned to adapt to their desert surroundings, along with a few scattered fellow homesteaders. Rachel and George Ellis took their daughter Janie and her two brothers on family picnics into the McDowells, frequently joined by artists like Phil Curtis, who lived in their Cattle Track enclave.

Others took the arduous trip across the desert to the McDowells or far north desert to hunt or for target practice. Teenagers went for remote parties called 'boondockers;' churches held sunrise services; it's even been rumored that bootleggers used the remote mountains to circumvent the restrictions of



The Jokake School for Girls, adjacent to the Jokake Inn on Camelback Road in the 1930s, maintained a Desert Camp at the base of the southern foothills of the McDowells. Students as well as Jokake Inn guests took day-long horseback rides to the rustic camp, located near the Mayo Clinic Shea campus today. Scottsdale Historical Society photo.

Prohibition. Whatever their reason for going in and around the McDowells, they were venturing into the great beyond.

After a post-World War II boom in population, business and tourism, Scottsdale was finally incorporated on June 25, 1951. At incorporation, the Town of Scottsdale comprised 2,032 residents living on 0.34 square miles. First priorities of the new town council were to pave streets, create a zoning system and provide or contract for basic municipal services like fire protection, water, sewage and signage. Putting infrastructure in place was essential to support the town's transition from farming to an economy driven by tourism, arts and culture, retail and residential development. The town continued to rely on citizen participation and management of various town services, such as recreation, youth services and a library, setting the stage for future public-private partnerships that would define Scottsdale and its innovative spirit.

To control its destiny and maintain its cachet as a tourism, arts and cultural center, as well as a great place to live and work, Scottsdale began annexing unincorporated county land in all directions. By 1961, the town had achieved city status, and had a population of 10,000 living within five square miles. When Phoenix threatened to annex the area that had been the World War II Thunderbird II airfield and the western slopes of the McDowell Mountains, Scottsdale preemptively annexed the contested land in 1963. The 1965 special census showed a huge increase in population and land area – 54,500 people living on 52.25 square miles – that was challenging the city's modest infrastructure.

To get their arms around current and future needs, Scottsdale residents were



Famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright established his winter home and School of Architecture at Taliesin West on the southwestern foothills of the McDowells in 1937. Vernon Swaback apprenticed with Wright at Taliesin West in the late 1950s, became a renowned architect and author and was instrumental in Scottsdale Visioning as well as envisioning the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. Vernon Swaback collection.

invited to participate in the 1964-65 Scottsdale Town Enrichment Program (STEP) forums. STEP committees recommended bold measures to retain and enhance Scottsdale's character: stringent ordinances to ban billboards and require utility lines to be placed underground, creation of a multi-use recreational greenbelt (instead of a concrete channel) to control flooding of the Indian Bend Wash, and a commitment to build parks and equestrian trails throughout the community. STEP participants also advocated a civic center, performing arts venue, municipal airport and a junior college. Coinciding with the STEP process, Scottsdale was formulating its first comprehensive General Plan that would spell out how current and future land would be developed or kept as open space.

As the city's population migrated north of the downtown area into master-planned communities like McCormick Ranch, and an industrial airpark was created surrounding Scottsdale Municipal Airport, the McDowells seemed closer and more alluring to the adventurous. The mountains continued to be used as a playground for residents and tourists, who were mostly trespassing on private or public lands. Savvy real estate investors were buying tracts of land along the southern and western slopes of the McDowells, with plans to hold onto their investments until the time and infrastructure were right for development.

To meet current and future demand for more parks and recreation areas, the Scottsdale City Council gave the go-ahead to then-Scottsdale Parks Director L.B. Scacewater to apply to develop a 1,280-acre city park in the McDowell Mountains, following a presentation of a land plan done by Taliesin West/Aubrey Banks and Charles Montooth. According to the May 17, 1972, *Scottsdale Daily Progress*, "The proposed park is located in the far southeast corner of the McDowell Mountains ranch [sic - 'ranch' should be 'range'] with elevations varying from 1,400 to 4,000 feet. There is no level land and the most gentle slopes are 8 to 1. The

architects said that if the city acquires the park land every effort should be made to keep the especially scenic, rugged unspoiled desert region in its natural state. Dominating the park on the west is 4,034-foot McDowell Peak which has yet been untouched by man, according to the architects. The architects suggested many uses for the parks which include hiking, riding, bicycling, camping, picnicking, educational trips, target shooting, wildlife photography and bird watching.” Scottsdale officially gained control of this land from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and the State of Arizona in the mid-1970s; however, it was never developed into a city park because of its remoteness and lack of road access. Two decades later, however, it would be among the first tracts of land included in the preserve.

While the nation was ‘going green,’ and celebrating the first Earth Day in 1970, Scottsdale citizens and their city government began to plan land usage and require designs more compatible with the desert environment. By then the city had grown to 67,823 residents living on 62 square miles. The Brookings Institution conducted seminars over 10 months in 1972 focusing on the future of Scottsdale. Among the recommendations coming from participating residents were:

- “Build at a neighborhood scale which insures open space, environmental integrity and a full range of essential community facilities....”
- “Annex additional land to protect our environment and for sound boundaries....”
- “Concern for the environment will be the cornerstone of all development....”
- “Open space and recreational facilities in the McDowell Mountains will be actively sought.....”



After a final, large annexations between 1981 and 1984 that took Scottsdale’s northern border to the Tonto National Forest, residents and city planners met to develop the Tonto Foothills Plan, much of it promoting environmentally-sensitive development and open space. Shown here, left to right, Councilman Bill Walton, Dave Wood and city planner Dudley Onderdonk. Scottsdale Chamber of Commerce photo.



With passage of the Native Plant Ordinance in the 1980s, developers began to re-vegetate their sites with trees and cacti they had set aside during construction. Scottsdale Public Library collection.

Scottsdale residents were also moving the Indian Bend Wash Greenbelt Flood Control Project forward during the 1970s. Residents had bristled at a suggestion by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to solve Scottsdale's perennial flooding problem – created when seasonal rains overflowed the miles-long, north-south natural wash. The corps suggested building a linear concrete flood control channel that, however, would divide the city's population in two. That plan contrasted sharply with an alternative which many attribute to Bill Walton, then a landscape architect and city parks commissioner who was later a city Planning Director and served on the Scottsdale City Council from 1984 to 1992. The citizen-driven concept was to turn the entire Indian Bend Wash into a greenbelt of parkland, open space and recreational use that would also control floods. It became a top community priority.

Looking back, the Indian Bend Wash Greenbelt Project set a precedent for turning “Big Hairy Ideas” into reality and laid the foundation for the next “BHI,” the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. The two projects had many similarities. Both were citizen-initiated, voter approved, and open-space oriented. Both allowed transfers of development densities to create a win-win for landowners and developers and for the city as it sought to preserve or protect natural features. The greenbelt, like the preserve, was a long-haul project, conceived in 1964 and dedicated in 1985. It is as popular today as ever, and a focal point of community pride and outdoor recreation. It also serves its purpose when the rains come.

Scottsdale continued to annex land to the north and east during the 1970s. As the city took in more Maricopa County lands, it inherited county zoning that



The Central Arizona Project began to provide water to Scottsdale in the mid-1980s, but also became a 'north-south' reference point in describing Scottsdale. This view also shows the new Tournament Players Club golf course, opened in December 1986, and the Scottsdale Airport/Airpark. Scottsdale Public Library Collection.

classified most of the land suitable for one home per acre, whatever the terrain. Scottsdale worked to amend its General Plan with zoning appropriate for the terrain and anticipated use. After many public meetings and citizen input, the Northeast Area Plan was adopted in 1976 to guide development of the newly-annexed 25 square miles east along Shea Boulevard to the newly established Town of Fountain Hills. This plan established new standards by including many environmental guidelines regarding the McDowell Mountains. Concerned citizens and city planning staff members encouraged Mayor Bill Jenkins and the Scottsdale City Council to do whatever was possible to protect the McDowells from development that created significant and obvious alterations of the mountainsides, like they saw occurring on the slopes of Camelback Mountain, Mummy Mountain, Black Mountain and other Valley signature peaks.

And so they tried. After months of study and public hearings, the Hillside District Ordinance (No. 1081, Nov. 15, 1977) was adopted by the Scottsdale City Council to protect the McDowell Mountains from development. The Hillside District Ordinance was actually an amendment to the City's Zoning Ordinance (Zoning Case 72-Z-77). The city's planning and community development staff, led by Community Development Department Director Tim Bray, worked on this City Council initiative to "conserve the McDowell Mountains in their natural state and protect significant features of the surrounding lower slopes while accommodating development." In the city's 1977 annual report to citizens, the Hillside District was defined as two types – the McDowell Mountains and the lower slopes

surrounding the mountains. The report went on to say that the Hillside Program: “preserves the natural character and aesthetic value of the McDowell Mountains; protects people and property from potentially hazardous conditions peculiar to mountains and hillsides; accommodates development on the lower slopes while protecting the area’s natural character, resources and aesthetic value; encourages innovative development by providing the flexibility necessary to produce unique, environmentally sensitive projects; lessens hillside disturbance and potential problems such as construction scars, erosion, increased runoff and downstream flood hazards; and minimizes the costs to the city of providing public services and facilities to developable hillside areas and prevents development where public services and facilities cannot be feasibly provided. The Hillside Ordinance established a development density exchange program that allows us to preserve the upper slopes of the McDowell Mountains while allowing for controlled growth on the lower slopes. It is hoped that this type of zoning will enable the city to preserve the beauty and grandeur of the mountains for the enjoyment of our own and future generations.”

One week after Scottsdale enacted the Hillside Ordinance in November 1977, landowner Joyce Corrigan filed suit against the city, for, in effect, prohibiting development on 74 percent of her 4,800 acres. Although the Hillside Ordinance was amended in 1978 and 1979, the city’s legislation ping-ponged within the court system for the next 10 years, pitting city against landowner and preservation against constitutionality.

While the Hillside Ordinance was pending a final court decision, Scottsdale made several huge annexations from 1981 to 1984 that brought the municipal land area to 182 square miles and stretched its northern border to the Tonto National Forest. Previously zoned by Maricopa County, much of this land was highly desirable and developable.

McDowell Mountains landowner Joyce Corrigan filed suit in U.S. District Court against Scottsdale Mayor Herb Drinkwater, claiming that she had been unable to market her property since the decision to nullify the Hillside Ordinance,

“partly because of a remark by Drinkwater quoted in a Phoenix newspaper that he will not allow development in the McDowell Mountains ‘until hell freezes over’,”

according to an article in the March 14, 1985 *Scottsdale Progress*.

Again, thoughtful and forward-looking citizen involvement was essential to protect the area. Both the 1981 General Plan update and the Tonto Foothills Plan (which influenced the northern 36 square miles annexed in 1984) strongly emphasized the need for open space, environmental design, protection of natural features and use of natural vegetation. Implementation of these goals was not always successful, but did mark a commitment to retaining

the character of the Sonoran Desert.

Conscientious developers like Lyle Anderson and Jerry Nelson voluntarily limited mountainside construction and included privately owned and accessible natural open space in their new Desert Highlands (1983) and Troon Village (1986) communities located in newly-annexed lands near Pinnacle Peak. Their



Lyle Anderson's Desert Highlands luxury golf course community gained worldwide attention for Scottsdale when the November 1983 and 1984 Skins Games were nationally televised. Anderson and Jerry Nelson set many standards for environmentally-sensitive development in Scottsdale's newly-annexed northern areas. Scottsdale Historical Society photo.

concepts of establishing building envelopes amid areas of natural open space, the revegetation of sites with preserved desert plants and other environmentally-sensitive development set new standards for responsible development. In 1981, Scottsdale enacted its first Native Plant Ordinance (No. 2262), an important step in preserving large cacti and trees indigenous to the Sonoran Desert during the development process. During the 1980s, Scottsdale golf courses began using reclaimed water for irrigation and adopted the 'desert golf architecture' which Lyle Anderson and Jack Nicklaus debuted at Desert Highlands.

Juxtaposed with attempts to curb, limit or foster environmentally-friendly development were new amenities and infrastructure that would be catalysts for development in and around the McDowells and far north Scottsdale.

In 1985 and 1986, Scottsdale became the first municipal customer for water provided by the Central Arizona Canal, or "CAP." The canal flowed through Scottsdale along Bell Road and Frank Lloyd Wright Boulevard. The resulting CAP corridor was forecast as the next large-scale development area as the city's

population, businesses and tourism industry moved northward. In fact, the CAP became a defining landmark in Scottsdale, when residents and officials alike began to refer to something being either “north or south of the CAP.” Other magnets for growth toward the McDowells included:

- The Tournament Players Club-Scottsdale golf courses, which opened north of the CAP and became the new home to the PGA Tour’s Phoenix Open tournament in January 1987.
- The Scottsdale Princess Resort, which opened adjacent to the TPC golf courses.
- Horseman’s Park, later named WestWorld, home to many signature events, including the world-renowned Arabian Horse Show since 1989.
- The Scottsdale Airpark, where dozens of significant companies moved their offices and operations.

Growth was not only north; population and businesses moved east toward Fountain Hills, too. Just as Mayo Clinic opened a major facility on East Shea Boulevard in 1987, residents, healthcare ‘tourists’ and businesses were also drawn to the previously undeveloped area at the southern foothills of the McDowells.

Property and homeowner groups and individuals began to beat a path to Scottsdale City Hall, sounding the warning bells that the time to act on preservation was at hand. The Greater Pinnacle Peak Homeowners Association (established in 1977 by Ralph and Nancy Knight), desert activist Jane Rau (calling herself “the burr under Scottsdale’s saddle”) and Scottsdale’s biggest booster, Mayor Herb Drinkwater, were among those who spoke more frequently, and with more fervor, about the need to permanently preserve and protect the desert and mountains. Leaders of Scottsdale’s tourism industry also began to speak out about the need to preserve Scottsdale’s natural beauty and wide open spaces.

As community consciousness was awakening to the pressing need to preserve the desert environment, Scottsdale was, however, denied the tool it had hoped would save the McDowells from rampant development. The Arizona Supreme Court ruled in 1986 that Scottsdale’s Hillside Ordinance was unconstitutional. The ordinance was perceived as a “taking” of the land’s potential value from its owners without compensation. This opened the door to inevitable development up the western slopes of the McDowells and into the interior valleys of the mountain range. Private landowners and developers were poised to begin scraping and blading. After a few years of depressed economic conditions, developers and their lending institutions were primed to begin new projects north of the CAP canal and east along the southern portion of the McDowells.

The City of Scottsdale was still trying to come up with a plan to preserve as much of the McDowells as possible within legal restrictions. Within weeks of the court’s nullification of the Hillside Ordinance, the Scottsdale City Council created an Environmentally Sensitive Lands Advisory Committee to address “the complex relationship between hillside development and the preservation of

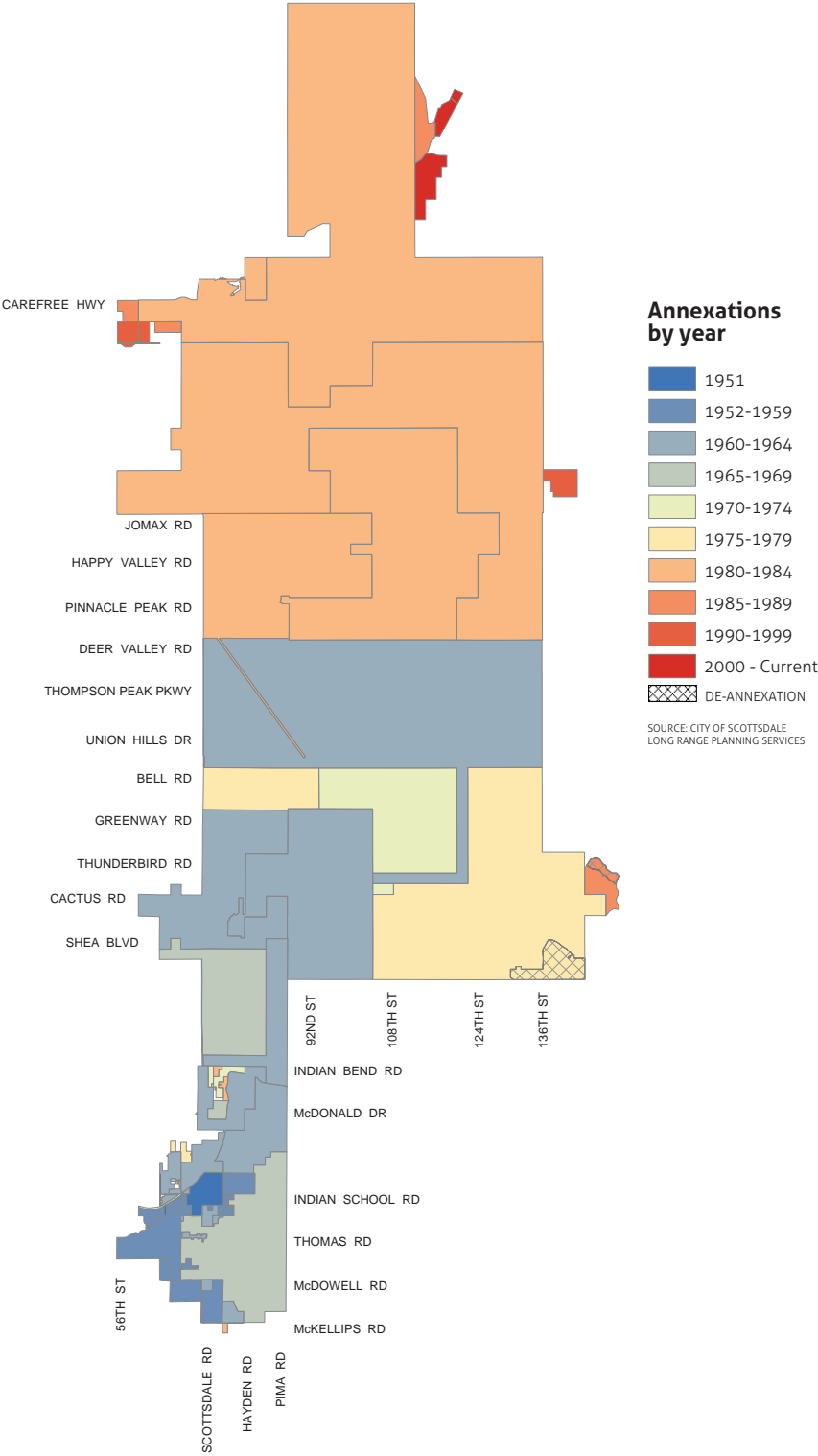
Scottsdale's fragile desert natural areas," according to the April 1987 *Scottsdale Citizen*. Bob Wagoner chaired the committee, which included diverse membership ranging from conservationist Becky Allison to developer Jerry Nelson.

Most Scottsdale residents still lived miles south of the mountains and were unaware of the impending threat to their signature scenic feature. People commonly thought that the northern mountains and deserts, where they could see no development or roads, were 'untouchable' and already 'saved.' Others assumed that the McDowells were part of the McDowell Mountain Regional County Park (which actually contains mostly desert slopes east of the actual McDowells) or the Tonto National Forest, and therefore protected. Regrettably, their assumptions were wrong. But by the late 1980s, development had already begun on the Scottsdale Mountain community, north of Shea Boulevard near Fountain Hills. Roads and rooftops on mountainsides were clearly visible to those living, working and visiting in central and southern Scottsdale. Perhaps this is what galvanized a handful of community visionaries, outdoor enthusiasts and scrappy desert dwellers, who foresaw, with dread, the unprecedented and explosive growth that was about to begin. Without a plan, but with plenty of passion and pluck, they were about to move the entire community of Scottsdale to action.



The unspoiled beauty of the Sonoran Desert spurred citizens to action. City of Scottsdale photo.

SCOTTSDALE'S MUNICIPAL LAND AREA HISTORY





MORE TO EXPLORE
Gateway Trailhead
Opened May 2009

Bill Timmerman photo

CHAPTER THREE

Consciousness Raising, Preserve Creating, 1990-1995

Scottsdale citizens – now numbering 130,075 on Scottsdale’s 184 square miles – entered the 1990s at the cusp of a seismic culture shift. They, along with the over five million annual visitors to Scottsdale, were becoming more vocal, expressing their chagrin at Scottsdale’s built environment overtaking and overshadowing its breathtaking natural environment. There seemed to be fewer wide open expanses and many more vistas of red-tiled roofs. One had to drive through traffic and quite a distance now to reach undeveloped open space. Vast areas north of the Central Arizona Project canal were prime for development, and the development-real estate-construction industry was a major economic engine for the city. Scottsdale could double, even triple in population during the next decade or two if the development trend continued.

Reflecting back, the year 1990 was pivotal in Scottsdale’s relatively young history. The Nineties heralded a new era in Scottsdale. Scottsdale’s community consciousness began to shift from one dominated by expansion, extraction and excavation to one of balancing preservation and open space with growth. Scottsdale residents launched into a flurry of environmental proactivity in 1990. No more procrastinating. No more presuming that laws or zoning might save the McDowells and the yet-to-be-developed desert. Alarmed residents and outdoor enthusiasts from all areas and backgrounds in the community were finding each other, and finding out that they had a common goal – to act now to



Residents participating in the 1991-92 Scottsdale Visioning process identified four dominant themes for Scottsdale, one of which was Desert Environment – providing a mandate for preserving the McDowells and desert. City of Scottsdale photo.



Florence Nelson, desert preservation advocate and educator, talks to Scottsdale Leadership Class VIII about 'desert critters.' Scottsdale Leadership photo.

protect Scottsdale's McDowell Mountains and surrounding Sonoran Desert from irreversible development and preserve as much open space as possible.

Development in and around the McDowells was no longer an 'in the distant future' concept; it was about to happen. On March 6, 1990, the Scottsdale City Council passed Resolution No. 3275, approving the zoning and development plan for the Corrigan Marley property, ending the "Hillside Ordinance" period of litigation between the city and the land owner regarding over 8,000 acres of the main ridgeline and three of the four highest peaks of the McDowell Mountains. As businesses and amenities opened near and north of the McDowell Mountains during 1990, preservation-minded residents worried that thousands more residents and businesses would be drawn to these vast and untouched lands. These harbingers of 1990s growth included: the FFCA headquarters, the first facility in the Perimeter Center north of the Central Arizona Project canal; the Ancala Country Club golf course on the southern foothills of the McDowells along Via Linda; Troon North Golf Club along Dynamite Boulevard; and plans for what would become the McDowell Mountain Ranch community between WestWorld and the McDowells. A recovering economic climate gave land owners – some of whom had held onto their properties for decades, just waiting for the right time to sell and/or develop – the green light to begin filing plans with the city.

Hikers and climbers of the Arizona Mountaineers Club who loved the McDowell Mountains, members of the equestrian community, homeowners association activists from northern Scottsdale and a few Scottsdale planning staff members found each other, perhaps with the help of the city's long-range planner Dudley Onderdonk. They held a few informal, hand-wringing meetings in early 1990. They talked about opportunities missed when landmark mountainsides – Black, Camelback and Mummy Mountains – in neighboring communities had been



Bill Ensign led many horseback riders into what was envisioned as the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. McDowell Sonoran Conservancy collection.

scarred by development, but were encouraged by recent efforts to stem further development of Camelback Mountain. Jane Rau recalled that none of the group was familiar with land trusts, so Onderdonk invited Tracy Conner from the Trust for Public Land to speak to the ad hoc group.

They were chomping at the bit to do something meaningful when they met on Nov. 17, 1990, at Scottsdale's Mustang Library. The agenda outlined the purpose of the gathering: to establish a land trust for the Scottsdale area. The attendees

selected a name, the McDowell Sonoran Land Trust, and agreed to urge protection of the McDowell Mountains from development. Signing the attendance sheet at the meeting were: Anna M. Marsolo (Arizona Mountaineering member), Jane Rau, Karen Bertiger, Pete Chasar (Mountaineers, Inc. member), Tracy Conner (Trust for Public Land), Stephen M. Jones (botanist), Mary Ann Driscoll, Frederick Davidson (attorney), Ralph M. Knight (Greater Pinnacle Peak Homeowners Association), Irene Habbo, Marilynn Pauwels (Nature Conservancy), Michael Milillo (City of Scottsdale) and [illegible first name] Howard.



Pete Chasar was the first chair of the McDowell Sonoran Land Trust in 1991; he is seen here at the 2009 dedication of the Gateway to the Preserve. City of Scottsdale photo.

In the words of founding member

Jane Rau, the MSLT was formed that night “to act as a facilitator to gain public access as well as the setting aside of the McDowells and portions of the Sonoran Desert for the enjoyment of all future generations.” The new organization was determined to act as the chief advocacy group on behalf of the voiceless but vital McDowell Mountains and the Sonoran Desert. They also wanted to begin fund-raising in order to begin buying land for a public trust or preserve.

They were off and running; Scottsdale’s preserve movement had officially begun. The McDowell Sonoran Land Conservancy (doing business as the McDowell Sonoran Land Trust, or MSLT) was incorporated in the State of Arizona as of Jan. 21, 1991, with Jane Rau and Karen Bertiger signing the legal documents. At its March 13 meeting, Pete Chasar was elected MSLT chair, Karen Bertiger treasurer and Jane Rau secretary. Fred Davidson was retained as corporate counsel. Sue Adams was selected as chair of the public information committee, Tom Adams was selected chair of the land selection criteria committee. Marilyn Pauwels was selected chair of the fund raising committee. Right off the bat, MSLT began urging the mayor and Scottsdale City Council to seriously consider preservation of the McDowell Mountains and surrounding Sonoran Desert. They spoke during the public comment period of every City Council meeting possible with a persistent, consistent and civil message: Preserve Scottsdale’s McDowells and Sonoran Desert. Members of the MSLT also began hosting hikes in the McDowells to heighten public awareness of the urgency to preserve. In April 1991, the MSLT held its first of countless public meetings – advertised as “An Invitation to Experience Our Growing Trust” – to introduce itself and gain supporters.

The MSLT attracted a wide range of residents and non-residents as members - from hikers, climbers and equestrians, to real estate professionals, retired

“The preserve was not on the radar screen. There were so many other things happening in Scottsdale’s economic development and tourism [in the early 1990s]. It took some education to inform the community.”

Dr. Art DeCabooter, then-president of Scottsdale Community College, former president of the Scottsdale Chamber of Commerce, co-chair of Scottsdale Visioning and first chair of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission

corporate executives, zoning attorneys and developers. Despite their different resumes, they shared the goal of preserving the land before it was too late. Tempe attorney Mark Knops joined Fred Davidson in donating countless hours to establish the MSLT and communicate its public policy positions. Retired Salt River Project engineer Chet Andrews served as the second MSLT chair and initiated key public outreach and land stewardship programs. Joining the board in 1992 were the brother and sister team of Greg Woodall and Carla (her full, legal name). The Woodall siblings grew up in a Hallcraft home in the southern

area of Scottsdale but spent their free time exploring what was then the “far away” northern desert and mountains. Greg, an archaeologist, used his extensive knowledge of this land to draw the first maps envisioning a large, natural, connected open-space system that would stretch from the McDowell Mountains



Greg Woodall, archaeologist and MSLT board member, gives a hike in the future preserve. Joan Fudala photo.

north to the Tonto National Forest. Carla was the driving force and articulate political strategist behind the preservation movement for over 15 years, first as a volunteer, then as the executive director of the MSLT from 1998 to 2007. John Nichols was a retired U.S. Army officer and Motorola executive who was also an ardent hiker and talented editorial writer. Christine Kovach was a banking executive and new mom, whose marketing and leadership skills helped the organization gain stature in the community. There were so many more, who were equally talented and devoted to the cause; this is but a sampling.

While the MSLT was busy in its first year of advocacy and outreach, a new process dubbed “Scottsdale Visioning” drew hundreds of residents from all areas of the city. They represented every demographic, as well as business owners and employees. They brainstormed what was most important to them about Scottsdale, and what were the priority items for Scottsdale to focus on in the near and distant future. Contracted by the City of Scottsdale, facilitated by then-City Manager Dick Bowers, and chaired by then-Scottsdale Community College President Art DeCabooter, Scottsdale Visioning was organized by architects Vern Swaback and John Sather of Swaback Partners. After numerous public hearings, open houses and committee

“I was like a kid in a candy store, when they asked my advice on what to include in a Recommended Study Boundary for a future McDowell Sonoran Preserve. I’d hiked so many places in the McDowells, and heard from others on my hikes what was special to them. There were just so many places with historic, geological and environmental significance. We had to be realistic, but we also wondered, how about if we just say no to roads and homes being built in entire areas?”

Archaeologist and outdoor enthusiast Greg Woodall

meetings over two years, and culminating in a large, public VisionFest held on Scottsdale Civic Center Mall, four central themes of utmost importance to residents were identified: preserving the city's desert lifestyle, arts and culture, healthy environment, and resort community. The Visioning process was critical in empowering the emerging preservation movement in Scottsdale and giving the tools – most notably Vision Task #7 – which enabled the McDowell Sonoran Land Trust and the community to push forward with the McDowell Sonoran Preserve concept.

Also in 1991, the City Council enacted a less stringent but legally acceptable Environmentally Sensitive Lands Ordinance (ESLO) to replace the negated Hillside Ordinance. Its content had been crafted by an advisory committee of Scottsdale residents and city staff. Laying out 'constitutionally-appropriate' ways to help protect mountainsides from residences and roads, there were still private ownership rights to consider. Zoning restrictions could only work so far; the only way to ensure permanent preservation of the mountains and adjacent desert was to buy land and place it in a permanent preserve. The overriding deficiency with ESLO is that it did not prohibit development on the mountains. It tried, through

density incentives, to encourage land owners to focus development on flatter and less environmentally sensitive portions of their land. The choice was the land owner's.

Scottsdale's mountains and open Sonoran Desert with abundant wildlife and unique desert flora had never been as threatened as they now were with the approaching tidal wave of homes, golf courses and business development and supporting infrastructure. Since most of the land in the mountains and foothills area was privately owned and zoned for development, it seemed inevitable that Scottsdale's signature landmark would be significantly marred forever. At least four residential and commercial developers announced plans for major developments in the early 1990s, which included mountainside lots. Scottsdale was nationally honored in 1993 as America's "most livable city," and land values were rising significantly, as many newcomers wanted to live in or near the



Mayor Herb Drinkwater championed preserving the McDowells for many years. City of Scottsdale photo.

mountains or desert open space. The mountain and high desert environment is what drew most residents and tourism businesses to Scottsdale; those who came for other reasons promptly fell in love with these natural treasures, too. Tourism – Scottsdale’s number one industry, employing nearly twenty-five percent of the population and creating over \$2 billion in economic impact annually in the early 1990s – also depended on the beauty, ambiance and adventure of the undeveloped mountain and desert areas.

With these facts in mind, volunteers of the McDowell Sonoran Land Trust worked tirelessly to create awareness of the treasures of the McDowells and the need to act immediately to save them from development. In partnership with city and school district officials, the MSLT created an education program, “Our McDowell Sonoran Heritage,” available to fourth graders in Scottsdale, Fountain Hills, Paradise Valley and Cave Creek. This innovative and timely program, presented at school assemblies and on desert hikes, taught students about the environment. During the program’s first year, Scottsdale Outdoor Recreation Specialist Yvonne Massman led more than 1,700 students on hikes into the envisioned preserve. These children then became “preserve ambassadors” to their parents, neighbors and friends. After raising \$30.15 for MSLT’s McDowell Mountain preservation effort by selling donuts at her Scottsdale middle school, 13-year-old Kristin Jaskie was invited to join the adults on the MSLT board. As a board member, Kristin teamed up with her mother Cindy Jaskie, Yvonne Massman and MSLT board member Carla to talk to thousands of fourth graders through the “Our McDowell Sonoran Heritage” program.

The MSLT also began raising money to buy land for a preserve and to create awareness for Scottsdale’s “preservation movement.” Among the first donors to support MSLT’s mission were H.B. Wallace, Arizona Public Service and the Greater Pinnacle Peak Homeowners Association. In a complementary move, the city created the McDowell Mountains Preservation Fund, administered by the Scottsdale Endowment Office, in order to accept private donations for land preservation. Any amount was welcome. Third- and fourth-grade students from



Kristen Jaskie was a student leader of the preserve movement, raising money, joining the MSLT board of directors and organizing programs at Scottsdale schools throughout her junior and senior high school years. City of Scottsdale photo.

Scottsdale's Aztec Elementary School presented the City Council with a check for \$1,369 at a meeting on June 6, 1994. The students raised the money by selling Majerle candy bars.

MSLT volunteers took their preservation advocacy beyond Scottsdale City Hall. In early 1992, MSLT Board Chair Pete Chasar and a U.S. Bureau of Land Management representative met with Maricopa County Board of Supervisors and Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department officials to discuss land swaps that could potentially help preserve McDowell Mountains land. There was, however, negative reaction from Scottsdale's neighbors in Fountain Hills to any effort to remove land from the county's McDowell Mountain Regional Park for development use, even if it resulted in preservation of Scottsdale's McDowell Mountains. The non-profit McDowell Park Association, led by Jack Frasure and Roy Kinsey, instead encouraged Scottsdale to look for other ways to preserve the land. Both men, their organizations and their Town of Fountain Hills became strong allies in Scottsdale's preservation efforts. MSLT Board members Chet Andrews and Karen Bertiger met in late November 1992 with an official from the State Land Department to review land exchange proposals for the McDowells. The MSLT was then invited to submit a letter of inquiry to the state agency regarding alternatives and proposals for the existing state land in the McDowells. In other words, no stone was left unturned at any government level, and MSLT members were not shy about meeting with anyone, anytime.

The grassroots groundswell of activity to preserve the McDowells also caught the attention of the local news media. MSLT volunteers took scores of reporters, columnists and photographers on hikes into the McDowells. The landscape, its cacti and critters and the view of encroaching development told the story without any need for embellishment from the hike leaders.

Rather than take an adversarial, pro-growth versus anti-growth approach, volunteer and city-appointed citizen groups came together to plan how to preserve the McDowell Mountains and adjacent desert. By now, all parties realized that the only way to ensure preservation was through land purchase. They also saw that by working with large land owners and developers, they might get some of the land desired for a future preserve donated. One such example came forward in 1992. The Herberger family, long-time Scottsdale area residents, business owners and philanthropists, sold their 3,200-acre ranch to Newhall Land & Farming Company. According to a history of McDowell Mountain Ranch on its website, "as part of the transaction, Bob Herberger stipulated that a portion of the property transfer to the public domain. Nearly 900 pristine acres nestled against the foothills on the southwestern slopes of the McDowell Mountains were donated to the City of Scottsdale for public use as part of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve – a gift valued at \$7 million."

In early 1993 the MSLT urged Mayor Drinkwater and the City Council to form a task force to identify land important to preserve, and then to recommend ways to fund that effort. The Scottsdale City Council established the McDowell Mountains Task Force via Resolution No. 3769 on March 15, 1993. The hard-working task force was chaired by business leader and avid equestrian Virginia Korte. Other members appointed were: Pete Neisser, vice chair; Marilyn



On Oct. 3, 1994, the Scottsdale City Council voted to create the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, announcing three parcels of land to comprise the beginnings of a much larger preserve. Carla collection photo.

Armstrong, Joseph Bill, Pete Chasar, Fred Davidson, Lynne Lagarde, Eldrid Nelson, Jane Rau, Larry Schneider, M.D., Jack Shay, Carol Shuler, Curt Smith, Susan Wheeler and Greg Woodall. Bob Cafarella headed the city staff support team. Their mission was to define public interest and goals for the McDowell Mountains and to recommend an action plan to reach these community goals.

After more than six months of meetings, fact-finding hikes and brainstorming, the task force presented its report to the Scottsdale City Council in October 1993. The report included a Recommended Study Boundary for a preserve, and encouraged the City Council to create a citizen body for advice on matters regarding the preservation effort, including funding. The report also emphasized the importance placed on designating the land as a natural “preserve,” not a park, so that the flora, fauna and historical treasures contained within it would be protected for generations to come. The document identified prospective usage rules so that appropriate public access and “passive” recreation would be allowed, but motorized vehicles and overuse would not. Archaeologist and task force member Greg Woodall pushed the group to “think big” about the land size so that it could remain biologically sustainable; he drew the first preserve boundary maps with key features and planned access that set the basis for the final preserve. Another significant recommendation was to change the name of the envisioned plan from ‘McDowell Mountain’ to ‘McDowell Sonoran’ Preserve in order to stress how important it was to save not just the mountaintops, but to provide connectivity with the Sonoran Desert. The task force report implored the city council to act quickly since development pressures on land desired for preservation were intense.

The Scottsdale City Council established the McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission on Jan. 18, 1994 by enacting Ordinance No. 2630. Initial appointees



Even the city's entry into the Fiesta Bowl parade on the eve of 1995 promoted the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. Carla photo collection.

were Chet Andrews, Carla, Art DeCabooter, Bill Ensign, Lou Jekel, Virginia Korte, Christine Kovach, Christine Laraway (Sheehy) and John Nichols, Scottsdale Advance Planning Director Bob Cafarella and Planner Don Meserve served as staff liaisons. The Council charged the commission to identify a preservation strategy and develop a realistic funding plan.

The new commission got right to work. To broaden participation, the commission established subcommittees. This provided the chairman the opportunity to invite interested citizens, affected property owners and many others – including those from surrounding communities who possessed knowledge or in other ways could assist – to meaningfully participate in the debate and preparation of recommendations. The commission initiated a public opinion poll on the need and desire to preserve the McDowells, conducted by Nelson/Robb in June 1994. The survey's results, as announced in a city news release, "indicated a strong preservation sentiment from all sectors of Scottsdale, reflected in the high importance placed on wildlife, heritage and conservation areas [both for its intrinsic value and to protect scenic views]. The results also pointed to a strong moral obligation to preserve the mountains for future generations. Overall, respondents saw the McDowells as a key element in defining Scottsdale's identity. This is consistent with Scottsdale's Shared Vision 'Sonoran Desert' theme. Key questions and responses included: 87 percent agreed we owe it to our children and future generations to take action now to protect and preserve; 83 percent indicated we have a moral obligation to be protective of the environment; and 77.5 percent said the McDowell Mountains are Scottsdale's most striking natural feature. Respondents said if the McDowells are not preserved, we will lose an important part of our community's identity."

Under the leadership of then-Scottsdale Community College President

and long-time civic leader Dr. Art DeCabooteer, the preserve commission held public hearings and received valuable and encouraging input from citizens. The commission and the MSLT formed a partnership from the very beginning, sharing many of the same members. In concert, they relayed a message not only to the community, but to land owners and potential developers: It is the public's will to preserve the mountains. In July 1994 the City Council, led by Mayor Drinkwater and Council members Mary Manross and Robert Pettycrew, adopted the commission's 16,460-acre recommended study boundary for the preserve.

The city further demonstrated its commitment to the preservation effort through a staff reorganization that created a preservation division in the city manager's office, with Bob Cafarella as preservation director. This raised the visibility of the preservation effort within the city organization and focused preservation issues in a single location. Additionally, the City of Scottsdale, NASA and Arizona State University teamed up to map the 60-square-mile McDowell Mountains to provide information about vegetation, terrain, water resources, slope and elevation by employing remote sensing, image processing and digital simulation.

Scottsdale's preserve movement was gaining momentum. Over 300 people attended a McDowell Sonoran Preserve Public Outreach Forum July 20, 1994, at the Hyatt Regency Scottsdale at Gainey Ranch. The forum was hosted by Hyatt General Manager Bill Eider-Orley, a tourism industry leader who gave early and strong support to the preserve effort, and co-sponsored by the MSLT, the preserve commission and the city. "Magnificent McDowells," a song written by Harry and Andrea Jill Higgins of Scottsdale and performed by the Scottsdale Symphony Chorale, debuted at the forum to a rousing ovation.



Bob Cafarella (left) served as the City of Scottsdale's Preserve Director from the early 1990s through his retirement in 2009, negotiating land acquisitions and managing the preserve. Don Meserve (right) conducted many preservation projects for the city, from archaeological studies, to obtaining state approval for names of landmark peaks and features. They were featured on the May page of the city's 2001 calendar. City of Scottsdale photo.

Eider-Orley was not the only hotelier and tourism professional to get behind the preserve effort. Others included Chaparral Suites General Manager Tom Silverman, Sunburst Resort General Manager Darren Smith and Scottsdale Chamber of Commerce Tourism Division Director Rachel Sacco. The Arizona State Horsemen's Association and Jean Anderson were also strong partners in Scottsdale's push to create a preserve.

The widespread support was achieving milestones. The biggest celebration of the preserve movement to date occurred on Oct. 3, 1994. With the McDowell Mountains as dramatic backdrop, the Scottsdale City Council formally dedicated the first lands for the preserve at an outdoor council meeting on the Brett's Barn deck at WestWorld. Mayor Herb Drinkwater and WestWorld's Bill Ensign led Council members on a horseback ride into the McDowells as a prelude to the meeting. Dozens of citizens, MSLT members, outdoor enthusiasts and school children spoke at the meeting. The evening culminated in the council's enacting Scottsdale Resolution No. 4103 establishing the initial McDowell Sonoran Preserve. The preserve on "Day One" was 4.5 square miles, or 2,860 acres, consisting of three parcels of city-owned land. The first was approximately 891 acres south of Bell Road near 120th Street, dedicated to the city by Newhall Land & Farming Co. and previous owners, the Herberger family. The second was 689 acres near 136th Street and Thunderbird Road, dedicated to the city by SunCor Development Company. The third was approximately two square miles of city-owned land north of Union Hills Drive along Scottsdale's eastern border that had been acquired from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management years earlier.

Scottsdale continued to grow rapidly in the 1990s – from 130,069 residents in 1990 to 168,176 in 1995 – and residential development was beginning



MSLT and the City of Scottsdale took thousands of people on hikes into what would become the preserve in order to create awareness of what would be protected, and why. Joan Fudala photo.

to encroach on the McDowell Mountains. Key members of the development community, once feared by preservation advocates as threatening adversaries, were now themselves discussing how a balance between responsible development and preservation could work and even enhance their development plans. The heart of the McDowells was controlled by the Corrigan-Marley family and DMB Associates, and was slated for development as a planned community called DC Ranch. After long negotiations with the preserve commission and city officials, the head of DMB Associates, Drew Brown, promised to hold back development in much of the McDowells if the city would buy the land. This was a huge leap of faith and commitment on DMB's part, and a great motivator to advocates of the preserve movement.

Culminating an extremely intense year of meetings, on-site exploration, expert advice and internal debate, the preserve commission came to a city council study session on Jan. 20, 1995, with a bold recommendation. Commission Chairman Art DeCabooter urged the Council to ask voters to approve a two-tenths of one percent sales tax increase to raise funds to buy land within the RSB for the preserve – and to do it as soon as possible. The commission, working in conjunction with landowners and city staff, estimated that buying the land within the 16,460-acre RSB would cost \$240 million. Their estimate also considered that some land might be dedicated or donated to the city by owners.

The geographic area the RSB encompassed was modified in a number of important ways to reflect feedback from the public on the preliminary recommendations formulated by the commission. The most significant change was to extend the RSB from the mountains in the Bell Road area west (so as to include hundreds of acres of bajada) to the future alignment of Thompson Peak Parkway. The RSB was extended to accommodate comments and concerns of residents living in south and central Scottsdale. Residents in these areas consistently told commissioners and staff that they understood the importance of the preserve to Scottsdale and supported the plan being brought forward by the commission. They cautioned that it could be difficult to gain the needed



Yvonne Massman, city recreation leader, leads a hike in the future preserve. City of Scottsdale photo.

broad support in their neighborhoods if residents perceived the preserve to be a benefit primarily to those in Scottsdale fortunate enough to live close to it. They encouraged commissioners and staff to create an area where all residents, regardless of physical prowess, could go to enjoy the beauty and magic of the Sonoran Desert. This was the inspiration for what subsequently became the Gateway to the Preserve.

At a Feb. 7, 1995 meeting, the Scottsdale City Council authorized a special election for May 23, 1995, by enacting Scottsdale Resolution No. 4198. Voters would decide on a proposition to increase the privilege and use tax (sales tax) 0.2 percent to provide funding for a period of 30 years for land acquisition within the Recommended Study Boundary for the preserve, based on recommendations of the preserve commission. Carla, on behalf of the newly-formed Save Our



Christine Kovach (center) organized a Mountain Ball in March 1995 to create awareness for the preserve and the upcoming preserve tax vote. Retired U.S. Sen. Barry Goldwater (left) was the honored guest of the ball. Richard Kovach is seated on the right. Kovach collection.

McDowells Public Affairs Committee, organized a turnout of diverse stakeholders from across the state to speak in support of the “preserve tax.” In fact, the group was so large that it overflowed the City Hall Kiva. Dozens of residents, along with several elementary school students, Phoenix residents who were frequent hikers, equestrians, mountain bikers and those who appreciated the beauty of the unspoiled McDowells spoke in favor of the tax well into the late-night session. Several Scottsdale residents spoke in opposition, citing a variety of concerns, more about process than about preservation. Mayor Drinkwater and Councilman Greg Bielli recused themselves for possible conflicts of interest, since each had

personal land ownership or development interests within the study boundary. This must have been a particularly hard “walk away” moment for Mayor Drinkwater, as he had been a champion for McDowell Mountain preservation for years. Vice Mayor Richard Thomas conducted the meeting and called for the council to decide after the hours of citizen testimony ended. The council voted four to one to put the measure on a May 23 ballot. Now it was up to voters to decide.

The Scottsdale Chamber of Commerce sent a list of more than 100 questions and concerns it had in regard to the ballot language almost immediately after the city council agreed to hold the special election. Although supportive in general of preserving the McDowell Mountains, the chamber was concerned about the use of funds for improvements, facilities and maintenance, as well as the length of the tax and the amount of the tax. At the March 20 meeting, the City Council approved Resolution Nos. 4236 and 4231 modifying the ballot language and clarifying the use of funds to be generated by the measure, now known as Proposition 400. The new language made clear that the funds would be used for land purchases only, pay-as-you-go-funding, and not used for facilities or improvements. The changes actually created a good news/bad news scenario. The new language helped clarify the campaign message for preserve advocates and the ballot measure gained the full support of the business community. However, the changes later forced the city to go back to the voters several more times to get authorization for bonding authority, to use funds for trailheads and appropriate improvements and to purchase land in an expanded study boundary.



MSLT-sponsored a National Trail Day 1993 event at the site of the McDowell Mountain Ranch trail. McDowell Sonoran Conservancy photo.

Shortly after the decision to put the preservation tax question on the May 1995 ballot, former City Councilman Ross Dean, and citizen activists Mark Frick and Lida Stewart formed a political action committee, CACTI, or Citizens Against Constant Tax Increases to oppose the measure. Their opposition was directed toward “an ill-defined proposal” rather than preservation itself. Members of a citizens group, the Community Council of Scottsdale, also voted to oppose the tax. Opponents labeled Proposition 400 “The Billion Dollar Boondoggle” in flyers. Others opposing the preserve tax felt that there were other issues, like transit and transportation, which were a higher priority for Scottsdale’s future.

With only three months to inform and motivate the Scottsdale electorate to get to the polls, members of the McDowell Sonoran Land Trust and preserve commission (acting as private citizens and not as commissioners), along with key business, tourism and community leaders, launched a grassroots campaign through the political action committee, Save Our McDowells. Wendy Springborn



As development approached the McDowells in 1990, individuals came together to take action. Joan Fudala photo.

and Ben Benedict served as co-chairs of the campaign to pass “Prop 400,” with Virginia Korte, Peter Homenick, John Berry, Wink Blair, Carla, Pete Chasar, Art DeCabooter, Joyce Hall, Kirsten Jaskie, Christine Kovach, Cynthia Lukas, Peter Neisser, Jane Rau, Tom Silverman and Susie Wheeler on the steering committee. The committee’s campaign materials illustrated how citizens would see a very modest sales tax increase – an additional penny for every \$5 spent in Scottsdale, or a total of about \$30 per family per year. Proponents also reminded voters that Scottsdale visitors, whose spending at the time accounted for approximately 50 percent of Scottsdale’s sales tax revenues, would pay nearly half of the “preserve tax.”

Building the broadest community support for the ballot measure was critical. Strong support came quickly from leading hoteliers who recognized the benefit to tourism. One of the freshest and most passionate voices came from middle school student Kristen Jaskie, who urged her fellow students to get their parents out to vote “yes.” Bill Ensign, retired city parks director and WestWorld manager, who chaired the land trust board at this pivotal time, initiated the successful “I Got My Ten” campaign whereby supporters would each sign up 10 friends to support the ballot measure.

During the brief campaign period the land trust took nearly 2,000 hikers into the mountains – believing firmly that every visitor to the land would be a sure “yes” vote. Banking executive Christine Kovach and others organized a Mountain Ball at the Hyatt Regency Resort at Gainey Ranch. There were pancake breakfasts, television and radio interviews, debates, forums and a ride through Windgate Pass. Writers like Cynthia Lukas, later a city councilwoman, penned eloquent editorials about the need for land preservation. Advertising expert Pete Chasar, the first chair of the land trust, designed the campaign’s collateral materials, which featured beautiful photographs of the McDowells. Many other volunteers spent untold hours, dedicated to the ‘in’ cause that was uniting Scottsdale. The scrappy campaign even caught the attention of NBC Nightly News, which sent a reporter to Scottsdale to cover the citizen-driven, pro-tax, pro-environment movement.

“T & T. Truth and trust. [I think that’s why Scottsdale residents voted to fund the preserve with a sales tax increase.] We had been reasonable caretakers; they trusted us with money, like they did when we built Scottsdale Stadium [in 1991-92]. And we told the truth; what we were saying was fact, and framed well.”

Dick Bowers, retired Scottsdale City Manager, 1990-2000, recalling the May 1995 preserve tax campaign.

After intense and sometimes contentious community dialogue throughout the three-and-a-half-month campaign, all the Save Our McDowells efforts paid off. On May 23, 1995, in a time when anti-tax sentiments prevailed across the nation, Scottsdale voters passed Prop 400 by an impressive 64 percent.

Advocates summed up their sentiments: “Pop the champagne; let’s go buy land for the preserve!”

MAGNIFICENT MCDOWELLS

by Harry Higgins

Magnificent McDowells,
Vista grand and wide,
Purpl'd panorama
Sonoran Desert pride,
Majestic, peaceful prospect,
Illuminating our worth,
Lifting heart and spirit -
Beyond the bonds of earth.

How can we save you?
How can we save you?
For all the world to see?
O, Magnificent McDowells,
We'll keep the vision free!

Magnificent McDowells,
Timeless, ancient place
Of quiet, regal beauty,
Superb, eternal space,
Reveal to us the wisdom
That nature's lore conveys,
And we'll preserve your treasure
For our generation's days.

How can we save you?
How can we save you?
For all the world to see?
O, Magnificent McDowells,
We'll keep the vision free!

Magnificent McDowells,
Reaching to the sky,
Your sent'nel peak looks down,
On endless days gone by.
We acclaim your splendor,
And we'll protect this place
For all our children's children
To value and embrace!

How can we save you?
How can we save you?
For all the world to see?
O, Magnificent McDowells,
We'll keep the vision free!





McDowell Sonoran Conservancy photo.



MORE TO EXPLORE
Tom's Thumb Trailhead
Opened October 2012

City of Scottsdale photo

CHAPTER FOUR

Expanding, Staffing and Accessing the Preserve, 1995-2004

Two months after Scottsdale voters approved the tax to fund land purchases in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, the money started flowing in. The two-tenths of one percent sales tax increase became effective July 1, 1995, and the first collection occurred Aug. 1, 1995, in the amount of \$532,000. But it was painfully obvious to city officials and preserve advocates that the pay-as-you-go system would not accumulate fast enough to make multi-million dollar private land purchases before developers revved up the bulldozers.

Although the most developable land was privately held, sections within the preserve Recommended Study Boundary were state trust lands. According to state statute, these parcels would be sold at auction to the highest bidder in order to raise funds for statewide education. This caused more hand-wringing in Scottsdale. Arizona Gov. Fife Symington, however, made an important announcement on the heels of Scottsdale's successful preserve tax approval. In June 1995, Gov. Symington unveiled the Arizona Preserve Initiative in response to concerns of many Arizonans over land use and preservation of open space. His plan, if approved, could protect vast tracts of environmentally sensitive Arizona State Trust land in locations throughout Arizona. The governor appointed Bill Ensign, McDowell Sonoran Land Trust chair, McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commissioner and former Scottsdale parks and recreation director, to the initiative task force. Advocating for the initiative and State Trust land reform would become a major focus of Scottsdale's preserve movement for the next two decades.



API Ceremony in 1996, with State Rep. Carolyn Allen, Gov. Fife Symington, Maria Baier. Carolyn Allen collection.



During McDowell Sonoran Preserve Month in October 1997, members of the McDowell Sonoran Land Trust and Fountain Hills preserve advocates hiked across the McDowells to show mutual support for saving the McDowells. Left to right: Chet Andrews, Jane Rau and Greg Woodall. McDowell Sonoran Conservancy photo.

On May 1, 1996, Governor Symington signed House Bill 2555, the Arizona Preserve Initiative, into law. According to Arizona State Trust Land: Arizona State Senate Issue Brief, Dec. 6, 2013, “API provides a process for conserving trust land as open space within a jurisdiction. As part of this process, trust land may be reclassified and sold or leased through public auction. For the purposes of the API, the statute defines conservation as protection of the natural assets of state trust land for the long-term benefit of the land, the trust beneficiaries, lessees, the public and the unique resources that each area contains such as open space, scenic beauty, protected plants, wildlife, archaeology and multiple use values.” The City of Scottsdale, the McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission, the McDowell Sonoran Land Trust and many citizens supported passage of the bill, which gave Scottsdale additional preservation options, such as conservation leases, for addressing the 3,200 acres of state trust land then within the preserve’s study boundary.

State Rep. Carolyn Allen (who affectionately became known as ‘the godmother of the API’), Arizona State Land Commissioner Jean Hassell and Governor Symington were all instrumental in the bill’s passage. Carolyn Allen credits Arizona’s U.S. Sen. John McCain for giving it a push, too. Throughout the process, Scottsdale Councilwoman Manross tirelessly promoted the need for conservation of appropriate state trust land. She led the local government effort that pushed for the development, and ultimate implementation, of API, and she generally served as the spokesperson representing the interest of local governments in the debates among the myriad of statewide groups that participated in the dialogue.

Just as Scottsdale's love affair with its new and potentially huge preserve was blossoming, Mother Nature dealt a cruel blow. In early July 1995, the lightning-caused Rio Fire swept around a neighborhood in the Troon area, up into the McDowells and across the desert toward Fountain Hills. The wildfire burned much of the vegetation in the county's McDowell Mountain Regional Park, but spared Scottsdale neighborhoods in the path of the fast-moving flames. Scottsdale's Rural/Metro Wildland Fire Division – on the ground and with aerial slurry bombers – was heralded for its quick actions to save lives and structures. With so much focus on the McDowells during the lead-up to the vote, this seemed a wake-up call to how natural forces could impact Scottsdale's signature asset. It also strengthened the relationship among preserve advocates, the city and the fire department in fire safety and prevention programs.

On July 11, 1995, the Scottsdale City Council amended zoning for DC Ranch, an 8,300-acre development with a maximum of 8,300 units. Developer DMB agreed to set aside 3,400 acres of open space that would become part of or adjacent to the preserve. This and other zoning and development process approvals, along with the accumulation of preserve tax funds, launched a period of land acquisition for the City of Scottsdale. Led by Preserve Director Bob Cafarella, the city began putting mechanisms in place to facilitate fair and equitable purchases of privately-owned land within the study boundary. For example, in November, after a competitive application process, the city awarded contracts for appraisal services to three local firms. Concurrently, the McDowell



McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission Chair Art DeCabooter, MSLT board member Carla and Mayor Sam Campana cut the ribbon for the Lost Dog Wash Trail in the southern area of the preserve in October 1997. McDowell Sonoran Conservancy photo.

Sonoran Preserve Commission refined its land acquisition priorities and strategy. Land was prioritized based on development pressures and intrinsic value after a lively debate. Some participating in the process encouraged establishing the mountain peaks as the highest priority.

At the one-year anniversary of the vote to increase the sales tax to fund land purchases for the preserve, the city announced acquisition of 160 acres from eight separate land owners in the “Gateway” area of the preserve, near 104th Street and Bell Road. The city also acquired 90 acres from Scottsdale Mountain on the south side of the mountains, adjacent to existing preserve land. Scottsdale also received at no cost 200 acres from MCO Properties located within the preserve boundary in Fountain Hills. The donation deal also provided for de-annexation by Fountain Hills and annexation by Scottsdale. These acquisitions brought the total size of the preserve to 3,310 acres. Unfortunately, some earlier-approved developments in the foothills of the McDowells were already being built. While these developers did work with the city to either donate or sell some of the higher elevations for the preserve, there will always be regret among preserve advocates that community support for preservation efforts did not get underway in earnest much sooner. The two land purchases had to be structured so that payments would be made in installments, as revenue from the sales tax was accumulated. Each year the city council would have to approve that year’s payment.

There were other changes occurring in 1996 that impacted the preserve. After 16 years as Scottsdale’s beloved mayor and enthusiastic preserve advocate, Herb Drinkwater retired. Kathryn “Sam” Campana was elected mayor, and eagerly assumed the role of the city’s chief preserve champion. In fact, her council majority was now comprised of long-time preserve champions – Richard Thomas, Mary Manross, Robert Pettycrew and Cynthia Lukas.

The McDowell Sonoran Land Trust continued to be the grassroots preserve advocacy group that it had been since forming in 1990, but its mission was expanding as the preserve was expanding. The land trust became the essential ingredient in a highly productive public-private partnership that would shepherd the preserve into the future. The mayor and city council, the preserve commission and preserve division staff, working in concert with the land trust, were focused on ‘institutionalizing’ the preserve and fulfilling a promise made

“Developers saw an opportunity to create ‘beachfront’ property at the foothills of the McDowells.”

Kathryn Sam Campana,
Scottsdale Mayor 1996-2000

to voters to protect and manage the preserve and to provide appropriate public access for passive recreational use. The City of Scottsdale owned the preserve, was responsible both for negotiating to buy land using the preserve tax and, in conjunction with the commission, was responsible for developing rules, regulations, access and trails plans for the preserve. It was in management of the preserve where the partnership was most pronounced. Although the city was ultimately responsible for the land it owned, the preserve division was comprised of a staff of two (until Claire Miller was hired in 1999 as preserve manager). The non-profit McDowell Sonoran Land Trust provided a cadre of volunteers that

in addition to their advocacy, education and public information activities, began to discuss the need to train volunteers to perform maintenance, trail-building and other stewardship functions in cooperation with and under the direction of city staff.

Scottsdale officials, the land trust and citizens partnered with the Town of Fountain Hills (located on the southeastern foothills of the McDowells) and the Conservancy of Fountain Hills in their work to preserve the eastern flanks of the McDowells that fell within their boundaries. Great friendships thrived through jointly sponsored events like the annual McDowell Sonoran Preserve Month and in the town's successful 1997 sales tax initiative to fund preservation of the southeastern side of the McDowell Mountains and add to the shared preserve.

During the summer of 1996, preserve leaders and advocates worried that sales tax revenues would not come in fast enough to stay ahead of development. The Scottsdale City Council again decided to put a ballot question before the voters, this time asking for permission to sell revenue bonds which would be repaid from the preservation tax. On Sept.10, 1996, Scottsdale voters overwhelmingly supported the measure by an even greater margin than they had in May 1995 – 73

"I think our willingness to go out on a limb to create the preserve follows the tradition of the Indian Bend Wash [Greenbelt Flood Control Project]. We're Scottsdale, we're different, let's try it."

Don Hadder, long-range planner for the City of Scottsdale (1976 - 2014), who grew up and attended school in Scottsdale



The first class of McDowell Sonoran Land Trust Stewards graduated in 1998. McDowell Sonoran Conservancy photo.

percent favoring. This voter mandate, in the midst of a healthy economy, a fast-growing Scottsdale retail sector and a passion to protect the McDowells, would expedite land purchases of privately-owned land within the RSB. The following January the city council established the Scottsdale Preserve Authority as a non-profit Arizona corporation, which would be the entity to issue bonds to acquire land for the preserve. The first bonds were issued in spring 1997.

Also during summer 1996, and at the urging of Councilwoman Manross, Mayor Campana and the city council appointed a Desert Preservation Task Force, chaired by land trust board member Carla and co-chaired by architect Vern Swaback. After nearly nine months of meetings and hearings, the task force recommended in April 1997 that the city add 19,940 acres to the preserve,

creating a contiguous open-space system to support desert flora and fauna and maintain historic trails.

In a ballot proposition in November 1998 Scottsdale voters overwhelmingly agreed (by 70 percent in favor) to use the 1995-voter approved mountain preservation sales tax to buy surrounding desert lands also.

The now-envisioned 36,400-acre preserve was thereby enlarged to protect nearly one-third of Scottsdale as open space. By acquiring this new area, the city would connect the expanded preserve to the Tonto National Forest in the north and to the trails and open space systems of neighboring communities, including the county's McDowell Mountain Regional Park. This natural connectivity was critical to ensuring the biological sustainability of the land. The importance of this geographic area as natural open space was acknowledged when staff from the Arizona Game and Fish Department stated the planned

“I would encourage skeptics to look at the past 10 years and how much has been accomplished. We’re doing what no other city in the nation has even tried. We’ve created a paradigm shift in how our community views land while still protecting our tourism industry and enhancing the value of developments that do occur. Most importantly, we’re creating a living classroom and recreational oasis within this very urban Valley that will provide respite for our souls. It’s my hope that even our critics will come to understand the importance of this preserve. Maybe it will happen when their grandchildren are hiking it, experiencing nature and history firsthand and thanking their forefathers for having the courage and vision to protect this priceless natural legacy. Our community has done something pretty amazing.”

Carla, then-executive director of the McDowell Sonoran Land Trust and the driving force behind creation of the preserve, wrote in an editorial published in *The Scottsdale Republic* Oct. 11, 2004 in commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve

preserve in Scottsdale was the most significant natural habit in the region after the Tonto National Forest. On the same November 1998 ballot was a change to the city charter, which would prohibit any future city council from selling or leasing land in the preserve without a vote of the people (the ‘in perpetuity’ clause). The charter amendment passed with 81 percent in favor. People from all



The MSLT and the city partnered with volunteers to conduct large-scale cleanups of the preserve, such as this one at Brown's Ranch in 2000. McDowell Sonoran Conservancy photo.

walks of Scottsdale life had spoken with their hearts and wallets to say preserving open space and natural habitat was important to them – forever.

Although getting the preserve started was the major eco-buzz of the 1990s, Scottsdale was going green in other ways. Through a variety of acts and affirmations, leaders and citizens continued to strengthen the community character as environmentally friendly and consistent with the four themes identified in Scottsdale Visioning. The city started a curbside recycling program in 1996, strongly advocated by high school students. Les Conklin and other volunteers founded the Friends of the Scenic Drive to preserve and protect native Sonoran Desert vegetation along the northern stretch of Scottsdale Road from Happy Valley Road to Carefree Highway. The Great Sonoran group formed to discuss ways to achieve minimum visual impact of Scottsdale's built environment as championed by activist Tony Nelssen. The Coalition of Pinnacle Peak became a vocal group at City Hall, with a goal of protecting neighborhoods, preserving the natural environment and promoting government fiscal responsibility. Fifteen hundred residents and business leaders participated in the CityShape 2020 process, which took the four themes of the 1991-92 Scottsdale Visioning program and incorporated them into a revised Scottsdale General Plan. CityShape established six guiding principles for land use and planning: Preserve meaningful open space, enhance neighborhoods, advance transportation, seek sustainability, support economic vitality and value Scottsdale's unique lifestyle and character. The City Council, in response to requests from the Scottsdale Historical Society and many residents, established the Scottsdale Historic Preservation Commission



During the 1990s, the Cactus Cup Mountain Bike event took place on trails in the newly-created McDowell Sonoran Preserve. Mountain biking in the preserve remains a popular activity. City of Scottsdale photo.

in 1997. This led to passage of the city's first archaeological ordinance; many sites that it would protect were located in the preserve.

With strong community support – and an excellent bond rating – Scottsdale was moving fast to lock up private land for preservation. On Feb. 10, 1998, after more than a year of analysis and negotiation, Mayor Campana announced an agreement with DMB and the Corrigan-Marley family regarding DC Ranch that led to the preservation of 5,275 acres in the McDowell Mountains. This included Windgate Pass, one of the McDowell Mountains' most recognizable and sentimentally cherished features, as well as three of the four highest peaks (McDowell, Thompson and Tom's Thumb) and pristine valleys that could be seen from throughout Scottsdale and surrounding areas. The lands included in

the DC Ranch partnership agreement consisted of 2,685 acres that the city purchased for \$95 million. The remaining 2,590 acres within DC Ranch was protected by DMB and the Corrigan-Marley family as part of its master plan process. The city took title to 4,603 acres of land located in DC ranch on

July 15, 1998; an additional 672 acres were privately preserved by DMB and the Corrigan-Marley family. Cordial negotiations among all parties and an equitable purchase of private land that was highly developable officially closed the books on the Hillside Ordinance saga and, most importantly, preserved the heart, soul and backbone of the McDowells.

In a 1999 election, 77 percent of Scottsdale voters approved the issuance of “general obligation” bonds for preserve purchases. The change allowed the city to obtain lower interest rates to finance land purchases. Public support came in large measure thanks to a fourth Save Our McDowells campaign, co-chaired by Art DeCabooter, Virginia Korte and hotelier Darren Smith. That same year, the city made key purchases in the southern Lost Dog Wash access area, and also bought the historic Brown’s Ranch in the expanded northern desert preserve

“With you we share stewardship of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. Care for the land with the eye of an eagle, the heart of a mountain lion, the constancy of sunrise, with a father’s sternness and a mother’s tenderness that we may guard the sanctity of these mountains and fragile Sonoran Desert to present them unscarred to our children’s children.”

Carol Schilling’s inspirational words on McDowell Sonoran Conservancy Steward diplomas since 1998



Drew Brown, DMB, Dan Corrigan and Mayor Sam Campana celebrate the DC Ranch agreement in February 1998. Scottsdale Public Library collection.

“The first campaign [1995] really brought out a lot of people that we didn’t realize were such supporters of creating a McDowell Sonoran Preserve. We had all kinds of people that wanted to work with us.”

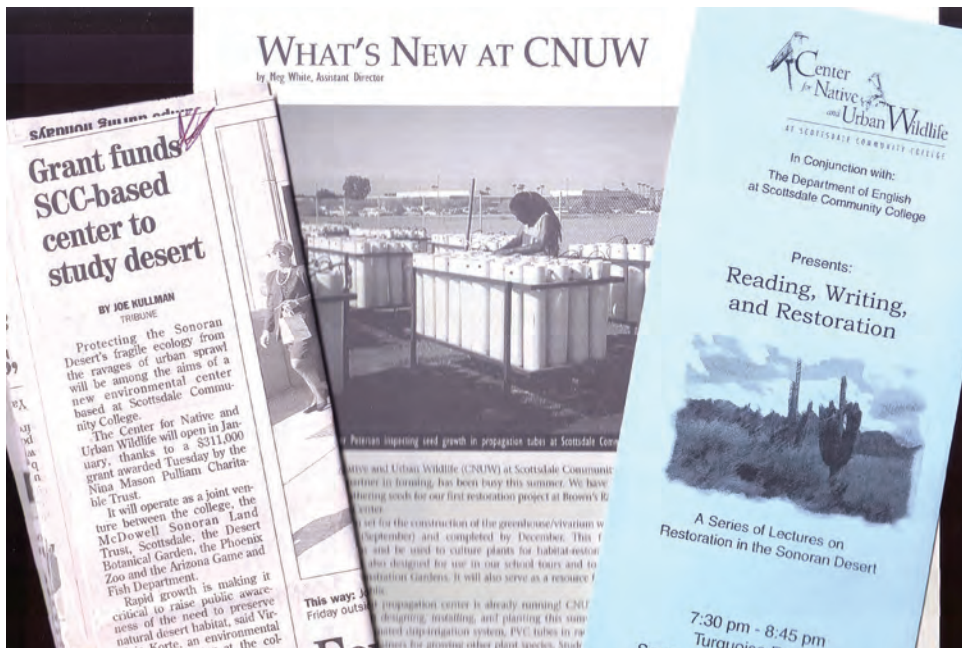
Chet Andrews, retired SRP engineer, second chair of the McDowell Sonoran Land Trust and “Steward #1”

area. By 2000, over 45 percent of the envisioned 36,400 acres were set aside for preservation, paid for by sales tax monies and financed by bonds based on future tax revenues. Developers and the McDowell Sonoran Land Trust had donated additional land.

While the city continued to negotiate land acquisitions throughout the late 1990s, the land trust expanded its preserve advocacy, stewardship and education programs. To manage a myriad of tasks and responsibilities, the trust hired its first

full-time executive director in 1997, Sandy Bahr. When Sandy left to join the staff of the Sierra Club, land trust board chair Carla resigned her position to become the executive director, where she led and grew the organization until leaving in 2007.

Partnering with Scottsdale Community College in fall 1998, the land trust began training volunteer preserve stewards who would, in conjunction with the city, be caretakers of the preserve. The trust’s *Mountain Lines* newsletter described the steward course as preparing participants for volunteer jobs that included “observing changing conditions in the preserve, reporting violations, removing trash, chatting with visitors and keeping track of safety



In 2000, Scottsdale Community College established its Center for Native and Urban Wildlife, and conducted a re-vegetation project in the Brown’s Ranch area of the preserve.



MSLT Stewards built many of the early trails in the preserve, such as this crew building the Sunrise Trail in 2004. McDowell Sonoran Conservancy photo.

and maintenance needs. Experts will discuss flora and fauna, archaeology and geology, first aid, fire prevention, community preservation efforts, and stewardship procedures.” The course was developed, designed and implemented by Carla and land trust board member Chet Andrews, who then served as the long-time head of the steward program, in cooperation with city staff. The first steward class included Art Agosta, Chet Andrews, Carla, Joan Clark, Jon Coffey, Nancy Dallett, Virginia Dotson, Jim Engstrom, Mary Flick, Janie Gomez-Terry, Lee Johnson, Richard Kautz, Bev Kinsey, Roy Kinsey, Carl Koch, Dick Rosler, Darcey Thomas and Tom Walsh.

Fulfilling the promise to give residents and visitors access to their preserve, the land trust’s hiking program expanded to include mountain biking and equestrian rides. Land trust trail builders worked with the city to plan and build appropriate access as lands were acquired. These trails were built without the benefit of preserve tax funds, which were restricted to land purchases. Instead, they were created through volunteer sweat equity and the occasional grant. New trails provided routes into the preserve from WestWorld, McDowell Mountain Ranch and Lost Dog Wash. The land trust and Scottsdale Community College received a grant from the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust in 2000 to establish a Center for Native

“We have a community of people who love their city and volunteer to serve it in many ways. The contributions of the hard-working McDowell Sonoran Conservancy stewards and volunteers are immeasurably important. And the fact that they love doing what they do, well that’s the magic of it.”

Scottsdale Mayor W.J. “Jim” Lane

and Urban Wildlife at the college. Students in the program helped re-vegetate and restore habitat in damaged areas of the preserve, particularly the Brown's Ranch area. The City and land trust partnered with civic groups and the Arizona National Guard for preserve cleanups, hauling away trash, old vehicles and other debris abandoned or dumped in remote areas that were now part of the preserve. As part of a larger acquisition of land within the preserve study boundary, the land trust purchased 31 acres of land for \$350,000 outside of the preserve's study boundary and donated it to the city for inclusion in the preserve in 2000. The city also acquired two additional parcels outside but adjacent to the preserve study boundary in the Lost Dog Wash area using a donation and funds from a previously established city preservation trust fund.

On May 23, 2000 – five years after the preserve tax vote – the Scottsdale City Council approved Ordinance No. 3321, outlining the scope, purpose, management and objectives of the preserve, as well as enacting rules and regulations regarding its use. Among the rules: no motorized vehicles, no littering or illegal dumping, no camping, no fires, no smoking, no glass containers, no firewood collecting, no collecting of any natural or archaeological materials, no feeding of wildlife, no graffiti and no wandering off trails. A year later, the commission recommended to the city council a ban of wireless telecommunications towers on preserve land. The hard-working, 11-member commission had previously devised an access area plan, which the city was pursuing as more lands were acquired. Although there were no funds yet to build trailheads, parking lots and more permanent trails, the city wanted to let current and future homeowners and businesses know where planned access area would be, so the Preserve Division erected signs announcing the 'future site of...' and held open houses during the planning process for each access area.

In June 2000, Councilwoman Mary Manross was elected mayor; Sam Campana had opted not to run for re-election. With the new mayor's background as a parks commissioner and a two-term city council member known for her passionate support of the preserve, the torch was passed to a supremely capable and effective preserve champion. Mayor Manross played a critical role in advocating state trust land reform and in obtaining reclassification of trust lands within the preserve study boundary as suitable for conservation.

The City of Scottsdale and the State Land Department underwent a year-long process to update the status of the 16,600 acres of state land envisioned for the preserve on the city's General Plan. On Feb. 15, 2001, the Arizona State Land Department held a public hearing at Desert Canyon Middle School to determine if 16,600 acres of state trust land in northern Scottsdale within the study boundary should be reclassified as "suitable for conservation" under the Arizona Preserve Initiative. Mayor Manross and the land trust, spearheaded by Executive Director Carla, spent almost two years building community partnerships and organizing a turnout of over 1,500 people – a record-shattering attendance for an API hearing – as well as thousands of letters in support of the reclassification.

On Aug. 30, 2001, State Land Commissioner Michael Anable signed an order reclassifying 78 percent of the state land (13,021 acres) within the study boundary, and committed to holding off public auction on the remaining 22



Jim Whittaker and Sue Livingston at MSLT event in 2002. Chet Andrews photo.

percent, thereby giving Scottsdale time to explore funding options to purchase the land for the preserve. All of the API-reclassified land appeared in a revised Scottsdale General Plan, now with all major roads and most commercially-designated sites in future preserve lands removed, and the remaining residential densities relocated. The Scottsdale City Council unanimously approved the changes in fall 2002.

In June 2002, the State Land Department auctioned 780 acres of state trust land north of Bell Road on either side of the Thompson Peak Parkway alignment. Roughly 400 acres east of the parkway alignment were within the preserve study boundary. These acres were not eligible for consideration under the Arizona Preserve Initiative as suitable for conservation, however, because the parcel had previously been planned and rezoned for development. Since the State Land Department opted to auction it as a single parcel, the City of Scottsdale was forced to work in cooperation with the successful bidder, Toll Brothers, Inc., to acquire the portion of the parcel within the study boundary that had long been designated as the site for the “Gateway to the Preserve” – the largest planned trailhead and public access facility. The issue would not be resolved until a jury decision in January 2008.

Preserve Director Bob Cafarella continued to negotiate purchase of land for the preserve from private landowners. He reported to the city council that at the end of 2000 the preserve consisted of 9,825 acres of city-owned land; by the end of 2001 there were only 665 acres of private land remaining to be considered for acquisition and inclusion in the envisioned 36,400-acre preserve. As the economy boomed, land prices escalated. The need to begin purchasing state trust land loomed ahead. Funds were needed to build trailhead facilities. Mayor Manross,

the preserve commission and land trust all recognized the need to go back to the voters for the fifth time for more money and broader authority for using the preserve tax for access and improvements.

After another successful grass-roots campaign, on May 18, 2004, Scottsdale voters again supported saving the mountains and desert. Question 1 of Proposition 400 provided funding from a 0.15 percent sales tax increase for further land purchases for the preserve, and for improvements to that land. Question 2 of the proposition authorized the sale of \$500 million in general obligation bonds to provide funds for the purchase of land and to construct amenities in the preserve. One of the projects included in the public safety portion of Prop. 400 passed by voters funded the creation of a special park and preserve patrol unit within the Scottsdale Police Department. Voters also re-elected preserve champion Mayor Manross to a second term in the May election.

On Oct. 3, 2004, at the 10th anniversary of the creation of the preserve, there



The fifth successful public vote to Save Our McDowells, "Protect and Preserve" in May 2004 provided funds for amenities, such as trailheads, for the preserve.

was much to celebrate. All of the private land within the study boundary had been purchased or was pending purchase, and 13,826 acres had been permanently preserved. Another 16,100 acres were conditionally protected under the Arizona Preserve Initiative. Nearly all of the private land had been amicably acquired, with only a few parcels requiring condemnation coupled with fairly-appraised compensation. The process to acquire the private land involved negotiations with more than a hundred individual land owners for parcels ranging in size

from slightly more than an acre to over five thousand acres. One hundred land trust stewards had volunteered 7,253 hours during the past 12 months. Sales taxes dedicated to the preserve program had generated \$131 million to date, with \$276 million spent to date on land acquisitions and \$5 million spent on legal services and other expenses. Voters had approved a slight sales tax increase and bonding capability to continue buying land. With voter approval to use the 2004 preserve tax revenues to build trailheads and trails for public access, the city and the McDowell Sonoran Land Trust had exciting work to do. There was optimism about state trust land reform that could benefit the preserve. Residents and tourists were drawn to the preserve for hikes, mountain biking, horseback rides, educational talks and a variety of volunteer opportunities.

In 10 short years, the preserve had become Scottsdale's point of pride, tourism magnet, favorite cause, leading media subject and resume fodder. In other words, if you had a connection to the preserve, you were "in."



Brown's Mountain. City of Scottsdale photo.



MORE TO EXPLORE
Brown's Ranch Trailhead
Opened June 2013

Bill Timmerman photo

CHAPTER FIVE

More Land; More Users, 2004-2014

It's amazing that a mere decade can make a monumental impact in the timeline of a 1.8-billion-year-old treasure. The decade of 2004 to 2014 could be described in a word: growing. There were growing pains, there was Growing Smarter, the preserve was growing larger and ever more popular, and a growing number of programs and projects enhanced access to, knowledge about and management of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve.

Providing the infrastructure for increased access began in earnest, now that a funding source was available. Thousands of people were visiting the preserve annually, and the demand for appropriate, planned access was at a peak. The Scottsdale City Council had approved a \$2.5 million master plan in February 2004 for a 300-mile citywide system of interconnected recreational trails, many of which were in the preserve. Sunrise Trailhead and the Sunrise Trail, the first professionally constructed preserve amenities, provided an access point and trail into the preserve near 145th Street and Via Linda as they were dedicated on March 4, 2005. The trailhead was donated by SunCor Development as part of the Hidden Hills project; former city parks director Bill Ensign had been instrumental in encouraging SunCor to donate the land for a preserve access area. Constructed with assistance of a State Parks Heritage Grant, the trail is 4.48 miles long with a 1,000-foot gain in elevation. The tallest peak along the trail is Sunrise Peak at 3,069 feet.



After a court decision allowing Scottsdale to buy the land, ground was broken for the Gateway to the Preserve on June 7, 2008. Left to right: Len Marcisz, Carla, Betty Drake, Jamie Drinkwater Buchanan, Mary Manross, Art DeCabooter and Jane Rau, with Tony Nelssen on his mule. McDowell Sonoran Conservancy photo.

The Lost Dog Wash Trailhead and Access Area to the preserve was dedicated in May 2006 at 124th Street north of Via Linda. The 4,000-square-foot facility on a seven-acre site is an award-winning model of sustainable design. Lost Dog was the first preserve trailhead to offer a full array of public amenities, such as public restrooms, water, an amphitheater and a covered seating area. Parking spaces

were designed to keep vehicles out of nearby neighborhoods.

A land trust Pathfinder Program, conceived and developed by steward BJ Tatro, was created to train volunteers to staff preserve trailheads and be welcoming ambassadors for visitors. At the suggestion of Scottsdale resident John David Hill in a letter to Mayor

“If you believe in miracles, this is one of them. We’ve preserved one third of Scottsdale as open space and changed our culture to one of environmental preservation.”

Virginia Korte, Scottsdale city council member, business and civic leader who chaired the city’s original McDowell Mountain Task Force in 1993.

Manross, the city and the land trust created “Preserve Connections,” a seasonal program which provided buses to transport residents from the southern part of Scottsdale to the preserve in order to take free land trust-guided hikes.

In January 2008 a Maricopa County Superior Court jury decided the city had to pay Toll Brothers \$81.9 million for a 383-acre parcel that was long planned as the site for the Gateway to the Preserve and a proposed Desert Discovery Center. The Scottsdale City Council opted not to appeal the six-year old dispute, and paid the settlement. The long-awaited Gateway to the Preserve broke ground in June 2008, parking was available by October, and the community gathered to celebrate the grand opening on May 2, 2009. Located off Thompson Peak Parkway in the DC Ranch area, the Gateway Trailhead included a state-of-the-art green building (rated LEED Platinum, which is the highest rating awarded in a national multi-level green building rating program administered by the Green Building Certification Institute), amphitheater and new trail connectivity. The Bajada Nature Trail opened in September 2009, designed and created as a barrier-free nature trail for those with mobility challenges or seeking an easy stroll into the preserve. It was made possible through the generous support of long-time preserve advocates, the Richard and Christine Kovach family.

The city’s and land trust’s shared management of the ever-expanding preserve evolved throughout the decade. Some changes went smoothly; others experienced the natural growing pains of any organization or movement as roles, responsibilities and personalities change.

In mid-2005 the McDowell Sonoran Land Trust changed its name to the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy. The



The McDowell Sonoran Land Trust changed its name to the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy in 2005. McDowell Sonoran Conservancy logo.



Christine Kovach releases a hawk at the opening of the Bajada Nature Trail at the Gateway to the Preserve. City of Scottsdale photo.

new name better reflected the non-profit group's increasing amount of stewardship and program work as well as its partnership with the city and its citizens, who actually own the preserve land. A new Conservancy logo was adopted, and the organization moved into an office suite at The Promenade on the northeast corner of Scottsdale Road and Frank Lloyd Wright Boulevard. The group's long-time executive director, Carla, stepped down in 2007, and Ruthie Carll stepped in. Founding and long-time board members retired and a new generation of volunteer preserve leaders took the reins. The organization remained the strongest advocate for completion of the 36,400-acre preserve and for state trust land reform. But the breadth and depth of the conservancy's education and stewardship programs added a new dimension to the

direction of the 15-year-old non-profit, grassroots, volunteer-driven organization.

The demographics and professional credentials of the conservancy stewards and other volunteers were impressive, and the scope of their ideas for the preserve seemed endless. For example, they started a mountain bike steward program, with BJ Heggli in the lead. A conservancy equestrian patrol unit was formed. With steward Jerry Miller lending his expertise, they tackled the invasive weed issue that affected the preserve and its native plant species and increased the danger of wildfire. Len Marcisz started a PastFinders group that performed in-depth research on historic features and sites in the preserve, then presented talks, wrote papers and incorporated this new information into Scottsdale and Arizona historical programs. Steward Fred Klein served as editor of *A Field Guide to the Preserve*, published in 2006. The conservancy's Ruthie Carll, a botanist, elevated the level of significant research conducted in the preserve. She created the interpretive aspects of the Bajada Nature Trail, describing Sonoran Desert flora and fauna on signs that are accessible to all. Linda Raish was hired as the conservancy's community development director and made many new friends, especially in the business community, for the group. Board member Leslie Dashew organized the Sonoran Desert Women, an affiliate of the conservancy that raised funds for educational displays and programs, starting with the new Brown's Ranch Trailhead. The conservancy offered programs for everyone – Family Fridays, photo contests, art exhibits, a fund-raising jazz concert, the McDowell

Sonoran Challenge, and, of course, its mainstay, free public interpretive hikes on the preserve's growing number of trails.

Changes in the city government brought changes to the preserve. The city brought fire protection in-house in July 2005, creating the first Scottsdale Fire Department in the city's then-54 year history. Fire protection had been previously handled by contract with Scottsdale-based Rural/Metro Corporation. The city and its fire department now assumed responsibility for fielding a wildland fire division and for protecting the preserve. In a tight race for mayor, Councilman Jim Lane edged out two-term incumbent Mary Manross in the November 2008 election, and Mayor Lane became the preserve's champion-in-chief. Founding Preserve Division Director Bob Cafarella retired in September 2009. His superb negotiating skills brought thousands of privately-held acres into the preserve with a fair price paid to landowners, and his planning acumen set up programs to effectively manage the thousands of acres in the preserve with minimum staff and budget. With Cafarella's retirement, the city reorganized the function, naming seasoned city planner Kroy Ekblaw as the chief land acquisition and planning point person, and placing operation and management of the preserve in Community Services General Manager Bill Murphy's purview.

"I am now walking on trails in the preserve's Windgate Pass where I once walked as a city planner mapping where roads and houses would be in DC Ranch."

Kroy Ekblaw, preserve director and long-time city planner in Scottsdale

After millennia of anonymity or colloquial nicknames, key features in the McDowells were officially named, with Don Meserve of the city's preservation division coordinating the effort. In 2006, the Arizona State Board on Geographic and Historic Names approved naming three features in the southern McDowell Mountains: Taliesin Overlook, Taliesin Wash and Lost Dog Wash. The next year the state naming board recognized Drinkwater Peak, Bell Pass, Windgate Pass, Horseshoe Ridge, Tom's Thumb, Gardener's Wall, Sven Slab, Morrell's Wall, Mesquite Canyon and Ochoa Wash with official names. As trailheads were built, the city dedicated amenities that honored several founding and long-time preserve champions: Carla Way that leads into the Gateway access area, the Chet Andrews Amphitheater at Lost Dog Wash Trailhead and the Jane Rau Interpretive Trail at Brown's Ranch Trailhead.

A nationwide economic recession that began in 2007-08 affected land and home prices and sales in Scottsdale – a good news/bad news situation. Some of the land prices within the Recommended Study Boundary were adjusted; however, a drop in tourism and retail spending reduced the amount of tax collected for preserve land purchases. These trends continued in 2009 and 2010. As the recession dragged on, financing for huge, new developments was hard to come by, but the State Land Department still needed to auction off state trust land. The city saw a window of opportunity, and Mayor Jim Lane urged the preserve commission to revamp its land acquisition strategies and tactics regarding state trust land. Scottsdale could leverage preserve tax funds with

funds available from the state's Growing Smarter Fund (created by the Arizona Preserve Initiative), and bid on state trust land within the study boundary. In September 2009 the council gave Ekblaw the go-ahead to begin the application

"I don't think it would have been successful if a city planner had pushed for preserving the McDowells. It was citizens that made it happen... The right combination of people came together around kitchen tables ... with the right chemistry ... and the right people were in political office."

Bob Cafarella, retired advanced-planning director and preserve director for the City of Scottsdale

process to bid on state trust lands. Late that fall, the city was the successful bidder for a state trust land parcel that added 400 scenic acres to the preserve. For the first time, Scottsdale tapped into the Growing Smarter matching funds to help pay for the land. The bid was \$6.5 million; of that amount, \$3.25 million came from a Growing Smarter

State Trust Land Acquisition Grant, approved by the Arizona State Parks Board in September 2009.

After years of a productive but informal partnership, the city and the conservancy signed a formal Memorandum of Understanding in December 2009. It outlined the volunteer staffing responsibilities of the MSC with regard to the city-owned preserve. This was a win-win for both entities, giving the conservancy official status, clear-cut roles and stability. For the city, it formalized a relationship that has saved Scottsdale thousands of dollars a year in potential labor and services. For example, in 2013 alone the conservancy dedicated 41,408 hours of volunteer service to the preserve. Despite this new contractual relationship, the conservancy remained entirely funded by private



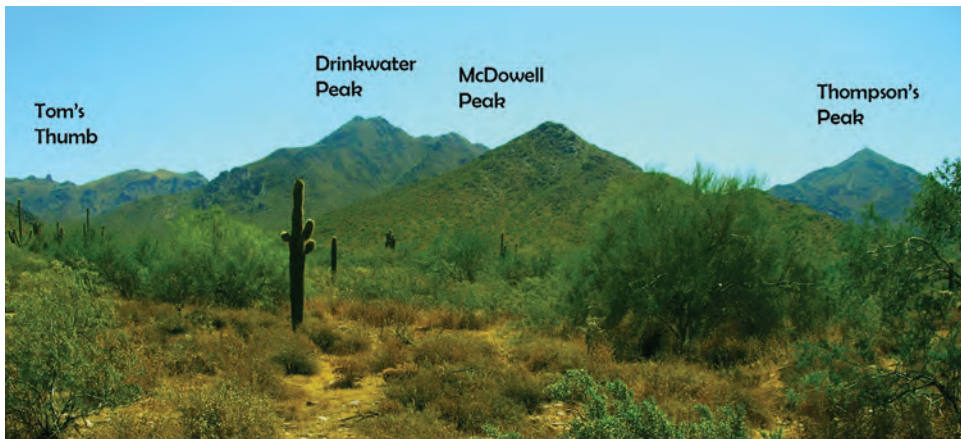
While awaiting a court decision on the land, the city held public meetings regarding the design of the Gateway to the Preserve, like this one on Feb. 16, 2006. Scottsdale Public Library collection.

fund-raising, receiving no public money to accomplish its stewardship and scientific research missions. Mike Nolan, the conservancy's new executive director, began his tenure in January 2011. With the MOU in place, the preserve was nearly 18,000 acres in size (over halfway to the goal) and his organization celebrated its 20th anniversary of incorporation and success.

Mike Nolan and the citizen scientists of the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy put renewed emphasis on the Conservancy's McDowell Sonoran Field Institute. The preserve, now one of the largest urban preserves in the nation and containing abundant wildlife and varieties of Sonoran Desert plants, is a scientific treasure trove. After more than two years, hundreds of volunteer hours, many hours of research geologist Brian Gootee's time, and support from the conservancy and the city, the Arizona Geological Survey reviewed and accepted for publication a paper describing work done on the mineralogy and geologic history of the Lost Dog Overlook area. Also that year, the institute began a baseline inventory of the flora and fauna of the preserve and published its findings in early 2014. In January 2012 Walter Thurber, principal investigator of birdlife for the institute, led the first bird survey in the preserve. After the first survey, he and preserve stewards



The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy celebrated its 20th anniversary with a Founders Day event at the Preserve Gateway in 2011. MSC Executive Director Mike Nolan (left) and MSC Board Chair Oliver Smith (right) were among the speakers. Joan Fudala photo.



In 2006 and 2007, the names of many of the peaks and features – like Drinkwater Peak and Tom's Thumb – in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve were officially recognized by the Arizona State Board of Geographical and Historic Names. City of Scottsdale photo.

trained to do the surveys visited the same six transects several times a year to identify species, migration patterns and other activity. As of December 2013, the bird count was 128 species. The city and conservancy continued to work with the Arizona Department of Game and Fish in large mammal counts that identified species in the preserve and tracked their distribution patterns. The conservancy has evolved into a science-based stewardship organization that still has a role in advocacy regarding the preserve. This evolution to science-based stewardship has been driven by the organization's success, along with the city and citizens of Scottsdale, in creating one of the largest urban preserve in the nation.

With Mayor Lane and the council fully behind the aggressive pursuit of acquiring large tracts of state trust land using a combination of preserve tax and Growing Smarter funds, the city acquired 2,000 acres of land for the preserve at a state land auction on October 15, 2010. The city – the only bidder – bid \$ 44.1 million. Approximately \$22.05 million of that came from a Growing Smarter State Trust Land Acquisition Grant, approved by the Arizona State Parks Board in September. The remainder of the purchase price came from money generated by the two dedicated sales taxes approved by Scottsdale voters in 1995 and 2004. The preserve land acquired included rolling topography with exposed bedrock, boulder outcrops, steep slopes, Cone Mountain and upper Sonoran Desert vegetation with a number of washes housing abundant wildlife, located one mile north of Dynamite Boulevard.

With this major purchase behind them, and wanting to continue to leverage access to Growing Smarter funds, the McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission re-evaluated strategies for how to pay for acquisition of the remaining 12,600 acres, estimated to cost about \$81 million. Most of the land remaining to be purchased was east of Pima Road and north of Dixileta Drive. Nothing was off the table in their brainstorming sessions, including tax increases, user fees or private fundraising; there were just fewer commissioners around the table. In September 2011 the Scottsdale City Council had adopted changes that affected the 20-some city boards and commissions on which citizens served. Among the changes was



Eagle Scouts were among the many groups who did volunteer work in the preserve. City of Scottsdale photo.

limiting the size of commissions to seven members, thus lowering the number serving on the preserve commission from eleven (the largest among all the commissions) to seven. The opportunity soon arose to buy more state trust land. Thanks to work of the commission and Ekblaw's diligence, the city acquired an additional 4,400 acres of state trust land for the preserve at two State Land Department auctions. At the Dec 7, 2011 auction, the city paid \$41 million for 1,927 acres, \$17.3 million of which came from a Growing Smarter grant and the remainder coming from the two sales tax funds approved by voters. This parcel included portions of Fraesfield Mountain and Rock Knob. On Dec. 14, the city acquired 2,482 acres for the preserve at a State Land Department auction of state trust land, paying \$45 million dollars. The preserve now comprised 21,400 contiguous acres, connecting the northern portion of the preserve to the southern area.



Bill Murphy and Kroy Ekblaw became the city executives responsible for the McDowell Sonoran Preserve in 2009. Joan Fudala photo.

To further stretch the remaining preserve tax dollars, the city refinanced the preserve bonds in 2012 to save the taxpayers about \$8.3 million. In 2004, the city had issued general obligation bonds for the capital investment and preserve land acquisition programs authorized by voters. Historically low borrowing rates now allowed the city to save millions by issuing new bonds and using the proceeds to pay off the higher interest 2004 bonds. While this important measure was occurring in the world of finance, the city celebrated another trailhead dedication. The Tom's Thumb Trailhead opened Oct. 18, 2012, giving access to the northern reaches of the preserve, including the Marcus Landslide Interpretive Trail. A month later, on Nov. 21, the city acquired 6,400 acres for the preserve in three state land auctions. The successful bids totaled \$88.2 million, approximately \$16 million of which came from a Growing Smarter State Trust Land Acquisition Grant, approved by the Arizona State Parks Board in September. The new acquisition created the long-desired connection to the Tonto National Forest, included the majority of Cholla and Granite mountains and extensive areas of exposed bedrock, boulder outcrops, lush upper Sonoran Desert vegetation including Rawhide Wash and a number of other large washes that are habitat for wildlife. At the end of 2012, the preserve comprised 27,800 contiguous acres, or 80 percent of Scottsdale's readjusted target of 34,000 acres (readjusted from the 36,400 acre figure previously cited, which was the result of less-precise



In March 2014, Jane Rau inaugurated the trail named in her honor at the Brown's Ranch Trailhead. City of Scottsdale photo.

measuring technology used in the 1990s, and also included the Fountain Hills portion of the preserve).

In a major leap forward in providing public access to the northern areas of the preserve, the city dedicated the Brown's Ranch Trailhead as well as the Granite Mountain and Fraesfield Mountain trailheads in 2013. Additionally, the city announced that approximately 55 miles of new trails were open in the preserve. The acquisition of land in the northern area provided the planned-for linkage between the preserve and the Tonto National Forest. More trail improvements were scheduled for winter 2013-14.

On Nov. 19, 2013, the city, as the only bidder, acquired 2,365 acres for the preserve at a state trust land auction. According to a city news release, "The city's successful bid was \$21.3 million – about \$8 million of that will come from a Growing Smarter State Trust Land Acquisition Grant approved by the Arizona State Parks Board in September. The remainder of the purchase price will come from money generated by two dedicated sales taxes approved by Scottsdale voters in 1995 and 2004." With this acquisition, Scottsdale's preserve encompassed roughly 30,200 contiguous acres – more than 47 square miles – and about 89 percent of the Recommended Study Boundary's 34,000 acres, or nearly a third of the city's land area. "Preserving these lands protects the main ridgeline of the McDowell Mountains and expands the land area of an important wildlife corridor connected to nearly three million acres of Tonto National Forest," the city announced to its citizens – the voters who five times affirmed their support at the polls, and who now come by the thousands to enjoy their preserve.

The city conducted a periodic survey of citizens in late 2013. Among the findings that related to the preserve:

- Recreation and wellness was identified as one of the facets most important to residents' quality of life.
- Paths and walking trails and open space were rated higher than other benchmark cities.
- A majority of respondents reported having walked or hiked in the preserve once a month or less; many of the respondents said they walked or hiked in the preserve at least two to four times a month.

These most recent citizen rankings tracked with surveys done in 2000 and 2010, which also placed high priority on preserving the desert and respecting the environment.

Whether they actually visited the preserve or merely enjoyed the beautiful view of the unspoiled scenic landmark from afar, Scottsdale's residents and visitors continued to consider the "people's preserve" a point of pride and shared accomplishment. The once-radical battle cry "Save Our McDowells" has become a mainstream community environmental ethic and, perhaps, the most significant goal and milestone in Scottsdale's history. Although there are still challenges ahead to finish land acquisition and maintain the vast area as a preserve and wildlife habitat, it's a monumental grassroots achievement that has garnered the world's attention.



Mayor W.J. "Jim" Lane (third from the left) and MSC Stewards enjoy a hike in the preserve shortly after his inauguration in January 2009. City of Scottsdale photo.



Raphael Bear, former tribal council member from the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation, blessed the opening of the Brown's Ranch Trailhead in October 2013. City of Scottsdale photo.



FRAESFIELD TRAILHEAD
SCOTTSDALE MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE



MORE TO EXPLORE
Fraesfield Trailhead
Opened January 2014

City of Scottsdale photo

CHAPTER SIX

Celebrating, Prognosticating

“Are we there yet?”

As the McDowell Sonoran Preserve celebrates its 20th anniversary on Oct. 3, 2014, an area of over 30,000 acres, or 89 percent of the goal, has been purchased or donated and protected in perpetuity from development. Eleven trailheads and 135 miles of trails provide appropriate, non-motorized public access for walking, hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, photography and learning about the riches of the Sonoran Desert. The preserve is a connected, living system of open space that provides a wildlife corridor and habitat for plant and animal species

“Scottsdale really does illustrate what it means today to be “The West’s Most Western Town” – in preserving the land and our history,”

Scottsdale Mayor W.J “Jim” Lane told a *Wall Street Journal* interviewer in November 2013.

found only in this region. The McDowell Mountain portion of the preserve is a signature scenic backdrop for residents, businesses and visitors, a viewshed that many call Scottsdale’s ‘oceanfront.’

There are tough challenges ahead in completing and maintaining the preserve. Two are utmost in the outlook of the City of Scottsdale and the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy. The remaining 4,000 acres of land envisioned for the preserve is state trust land that by law must be auctioned to the highest bidder with the interest from the proceeds going to



Volunteers from Sun Lakes and MSC Stewards clean up the Black Hills Tank area. McDowell Sonoran Conservancy photo.

benefit primarily the state's school systems. Nearly all of the remaining land does not fall within the Arizona Preserve Initiative guidelines as suitable for conservation, and is highly developable, valuable and supported by existing infrastructure. Because the remaining acres will be so expensive, the preserve tax revenues will not cover the cost of purchasing the land from the state. With over 30,000 acres to preserve and protect, there are management and maintenance challenges for the small but mighty city preserve staff and the hundreds of conservancy volunteers.

Other questions and challenges remain. Should the city maintain, or even expand, preserve rules and regulations, such as the ban on motorized vehicles and cell phone towers? How can the city balance public access with protection and preservation of the land as a preserve? How, where and for what purposes should the community build the long-debated Desert Discovery Center? How can the community encourage research and study of this unique, urban eco-system in order to positively impact plant, animal and human co-existence now and in the future? How can the conservancy continue to recruit, train and motivate the army of volunteers needed to operate and educate about the preserve? Does the city have adequate measures in place to prevent future Scottsdale city councils from selling land in the preserve to fund other city priorities?

Despite the challenges ahead, some resting on laurels and back-patting is surely deserved. Saving the McDowells has benefited the city far beyond land preservation. Consider these shifts in community culture since 1990:

- First and foremost, Scottsdale's residents and visitors have ensured the protection and preservation of a 1.8-billion-year-old natural asset, the McDowell Mountains and surrounding Sonoran Desert – in perpetuity. And they've shown their willingness to vote for it and pay for it.
- The more than 30,000 acres protected for the preserve as of 2014 are a connected open space system, wildlife habitat and ecosystem that is further



Hikers at Tom's Thumb Trailhead. Joan Fudala photo.

"They'll look back a hundred years from now and see that this is the best thing we could have done for Scottsdale."

Mary Manross, Scottsdale Mayor, 2000-2009



Volunteers from Sun Lakes and MSC Stewards clean up the Black Hills Tank area. McDowell Sonoran Conservancy photo.

expanded by connections to the Tonto National Forest, Maricopa County’s McDowell Mountain Regional Park, the Fountain Hills portion of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, Saddleback Mountain on the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community and the Indian Bend Wash.

- A spirit of partnership and civility among many diverse groups and factions has been forged, and thrives with the preserve as a touchstone.
- The preserve has helped unify residents separated by geography, too. Scottsdale is a shoestring town over thirty miles long and generally no more than eight miles wide, making it easy for residents to stay in their own part of the city. The preserve project has joined Scottsdale’s “new north” to its venerable “old south” in common purpose. It is truly all of the citizens who have paid for and created the preserve.
- The preserve movement has given the community new links with neighboring communities and other regional entities with whom Scottsdale shares common goals. Scottsdale has worked with Fountain Hills, the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, the Fort McDowell Indian Community, Maricopa County, Carefree and Cave Creek in creating the preserve.
- Advocating state trust land reform in order to expand the preserve has given Scottsdale a seat at the table when governors, state legislators and state land department officials discuss this long-haul issue with other advocates, pro and con, throughout Arizona.

“I believe that humans are supposed to partner with nature.”

Vern Swaback, Swaback Partners, Scottsdale Visioning leader, co-chair of the Desert Preservation Task Force and Frank Lloyd Wright-trained architect

- The preservation movement has also created a dramatic change in attitudes about open space. It is no longer accepted that open space is what is “left over” after development occurs. Citizens, officials and forward-thinking developers insist that open space be the beautiful framework within which our community grows.
- Creating a 34,000-acre preserve has also changed the attitudes of those who believed that preserving land would harm the robust economy. To the contrary, the preserve has boosted the community’s economy by offering a quality of life avidly desired, attracting tourists from around the globe and enhancing property values in those developments that so generously donated or willingly sold land for the preserve.
- The preserve is a model for other communities. It was among the first to recognize the importance of saving not just mountain tops, but of creating a sustainable, connected open space system with undisturbed habitat in which desert plants and wildlife can continue to thrive and be enjoyed by future generations.
- The preserve has become a focal point for civic leadership, volunteerism and community service. From Eagle Scouts, to homeowners associations, to



Scottsdale Mayor W.J. "Jim" Lane presided over the opening of the Tom's Thumb Trailhead Oct. 18, 2012. City of Scottsdale photo.

“To maintain the preserve in perpetuity, a critical tool will be to have good scientific information and good monitoring data and data on the human impact. That’s what we began collecting when we established the McDowell Sonoran Research Institute ... Collecting and sharing that data is a real opportunity created by the preserve, and for the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy.”

Mike Nolan, McDowell Sonoran Conservancy Executive Director since 2011 and a long-time conservationist leader in other parts of the U.S.



From a perpetually preserved vantage point in the McDowells, hikers can see the urbanization that once threatened Scottsdale's signature landmark and natural treasure. City of Scottsdale photo.

conservancy stewards, to corporate teambuilding events, to ‘volun-tourism’ projects conducted by groups here for meetings and conventions, thousands of people of all ages donate countless hours to maintain the preserve.

- The preserve is the predominant theme for Scottsdale’s global tourism marketing and advertising, and provides visitors with an authentic Sonoran Desert experience, whether they hike in the preserve, drive by it or merely enjoy the view from a resort patio.
- Recreation in the preserve fosters a healthy, active outdoor lifestyle for Scottsdale residents, visitors, employees and students, and has provided opportunities for joint programs with Scottsdale’s “Cure Corridor” healthcare giants, such as Scottsdale Lincoln Health Network and Mayo Clinic Arizona.
- Creating the preserve has enhanced Scottsdale’s reputation as an innovative, environmentally-sensitive and citizen-driven municipality. It is also a living example of the importance Scottsdale places on public-private partnerships that exist for the greater good of everyone in Scottsdale.
- The opportunities to conduct scientific research using the preserve as laboratory are limitless. Studies of geology, archaeology, botany, biology, ecology, climate change and other sciences can benefit Scottsdale, the region, Arizona and other areas globally with urban preserves in understanding the human-environment interface.

“Many Scottsdale residents, like me, don’t hike, but they know the value of having the McDowell Sonoran Preserve.”

Retired State Senator (and Representative)
Carolyn Allen, who also served on the Scottsdale Planning Commission and Scottsdale Visioning committees



The Bajada Nature Trail was designed to be accessible to people of all abilities. McDowell Sonoran Conservancy photo.

- And shouldn't it be mentioned that the views of the preserve are simply beautiful?

From a crazy idea promoted by cactus huggers – “really, we’re gonna preserve thousands of acres by taxing ourselves!?” – to a 30,000-plus-acre reality that is embraced by the overwhelming majority of residents – the McDowell Sonoran Preserve is now a fact of Scottsdale’s history. The shared environmental preservation mentality is a major shift in community culture from the full-speed-ahead growth mode of the 1980s and 1990s. And to have accomplished so much in such a short time is an astonishing achievement indeed.

“The early ‘cactus huggers’ – and that’s a good thing – were really catalysts in many ways because they pushed the envelope time and time again, and really worked diligently on the elections and on the informational process.”

Dr. Art DeCabooter, former president, Scottsdale Community College, co-chair of Scottsdale Visioning and first chair of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission

“In the future, I’d like people to go to visit the preserve, in whatever form they do, with a grateful heart ... and to maybe say to their child, ‘people worked hard to make sure this looks like this, and it looks about the same as when your grandfather was here’...that sometime, someone said, ‘Let’s not wreck this!’”

Dick Bowers, retired Scottsdale City Manager, 1990-2000 and Scottsdale resident



The Brown's Ranch Trailhead, which opened October 2013, appeals to a wide range of outdoor enthusiasts. City of Scottsdale photos.





Howard Myers photo.

APPENDIX A:

Dedication Plaques

These plaques, located at the Gateway and Brown's Ranch trailheads, recognize the many different people who have had a hand in creating Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve.

Dedicated to Arizona

In honor and gratitude to the citizens and government officials of the State of Arizona in sharing the city of Scottsdale's vision to create and complete Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve, thus ensuring the protection of more than 30,000 acres of Sonoran Desert for this generation and all future Arizona residents and visitors that follow.



Our thanks to Governors Fife Symington, Jane D. Hull, Janet Napolitano and Jan Brewer, and Scottsdale's state legislators who have served since the preservation effort began in the early 1990's, as well as to the Arizona State Parks, State Land and Game & Fish departments.



Portions of the Preserve acquisitions of State Trust Lands have been financed in part by grants from the Land Conservation Fund authorized by the voters of Arizona and administered by the Arizona State Parks Board. Projected through December 2013, eight separate grants have provided approximately \$86 million of the \$250 million land costs for roughly 15,500 acres of State Trust Lands that Scottsdale has acquired for the Preserve. We are sincerely grateful to the voters and taxpayers of Arizona who have assisted Scottsdale in securing these portions of Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve.

Dedicated to Scottsdale's Elected Officials

Past, present and future generations of Scottsdale residents and visitors gratefully acknowledge the vision, dedication and courage of Scottsdale's elected officials in creating Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve on Oct. 3, 1994.



Their continued leadership in expanding, completing and governing the preserve stands as testament to their loyalty to the citizens of Scottsdale, who have consistently voted to support preservation of more than 30,000 acres of Sonoran Desert in perpetuity.



Special thanks to the Mayors and members of the Scottsdale City Council who have served since March 1993, when the Council established the "McDowell Mountain Task Force," through October 2013:

Mayors

Sam Kathryn Campana
Herbert Drinkwater
W.J. "Jim" Lane
Mary Manross

Councilmembers

Greg Bielli
Lisa Borowsky
James Burke
Sam Kathryn Campana
Betty Drake
Wayne Ecton
Suzanne Klapp
Virginia Korte
W.J. "Jim" Lane
Robert Littlefield

Cynthia Lukas
Mary Manross
Ron McCullagh
Linda Milhaven
Marg Nelssen
Tony Nelssen
Ned O'Hearn
David Ortega
Kevin Osterman
Robert Pettycrew

Guy Phillips
Roberta Pilcher
Donald Prior
Dennis Robbins
Tom Silverman
Bill Soderquist
Richard Thomas
George Zraket

Dedicated to Scottsdale's Commission Volunteers

Creating a Preserve of more than 30,000 acres once seemed like an impossible dream, but not to the involved, creative and environmentally-sensitive residents, students and businesses of Scottsdale, Arizona. Since the early 1990's, the grass-roots effort to save the McDowell Mountains and Sonoran Desert lands has united a diverse citizenry, and called to action thousands of volunteers who have made this dream a reality.

McDowell Mountain Task Force

Marilyn Armstrong	Lynne Lagarde	Jack Shay
Joseph Bill	Pete Neisser	Carol Shuler
Pete Chasar	Eldrid Nelson	Curt Smith
Fred Davidson	Jane Rau	Susan Wheeler
Virginia Korte	Larry Schneider, M.D.	Greg Woodall

Desert Preservation Task Force

Jim Anthony	Art DeCabooter	Carol Shuler
John Berry	Bill Eider-Orley	Vern Swaback
James Brouhard	Keith Holben	Susan Wheeler
Carla	Mark McDermott	Greg Woodall
Ellen Carr	Richard Merritt	Joe Yarchin
Arlan Colton	Jane Rau	

McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission (through October 2013)

Chet Andrews	B.J. Heggli	Jane Rau
William Berkley	James Heitel	Arnold Roy
Dennis Carr	Rand Hubbell	Donald Ruff
Carla	Lou Jekel	Tom Silverman
Les Conklin	DeForest Joralmon	Darren Smith
Fred Corbus	Fred Klein	Darcy Thomas
Art DeCabooter	Virginia Korte	Susan Wheeler
Con Engelhorn	Christine Kovach	Linda Whitehead
Bill Ensign	Christine Laraway	Solange Whitehead
Erik Filsinger	Gerald Miller	Don Williams
Laura Fisher	Mike Milillo	Greg Woodall
Bob Frost	Howard Myers	
Joan Fudala	Marg Nelssen	
Melinda Gulick	John Nichols	

Dedicated to the Citizens of Scottsdale

On May 23, 1995, Scottsdale voters overwhelmingly approved a 30-year sales tax to fund land purchases for the Scottsdale McDowell Sonoran Preserve. This vote was followed by additional votes that accelerated and expanded land purchases, including an additional 30 year sales tax in 2004. This ensured the permanent preservation of Scottsdale's signature Sonoran Desert and McDowell Mountains.



At a time when voter approval of tax increases was extremely rare throughout the United States, Scottsdale's voters demonstrated a love of their Sonoran Desert, a desire to share this beautiful environment with future generations, and a willingness to pay for the privilege of preserving a natural treasure.



Scottsdale's retail, tourism and business community – those who would be collecting the sales tax from their customers – have also been ardent supporters of Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve.



To the voters and taxpayers of Scottsdale, who enabled the creation of Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve, we are forever grateful.



Thank you for your support.

Dedicated to the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy

In honor of the small group of citizens with the vision and dedication to advocate for and help create Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve.



In honor of the organization they created in 1991, the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy, whose hundreds of volunteer stewards and citizen scientists have studied and helped create, protect and manage the Preserve for this and future generations.

McDowell Sonoran Land Trust/
McDowell Sonoran Conservancy Chairs
1990 – present

Chet Andrews
Carla
Ellen Carr
Pete Chasar
Con Englehorn

Bill Ensign
Laura Fisher
Melinda Gulick
Tom Headley
Christine Kovach

Len Marcisz
Jack McEnroe
Oliver Smith, Jr.

McDowell Sonoran Land Trust/
McDowell Sonoran Conservancy Executive Directors
1997 – present

Sandy Bahr
Carla
Ruthie Carll
Mike Nolan

APPENDIX B:

**Maps -
Original Recommended Study
Boundary - 1994**

Base photo as of April 2006

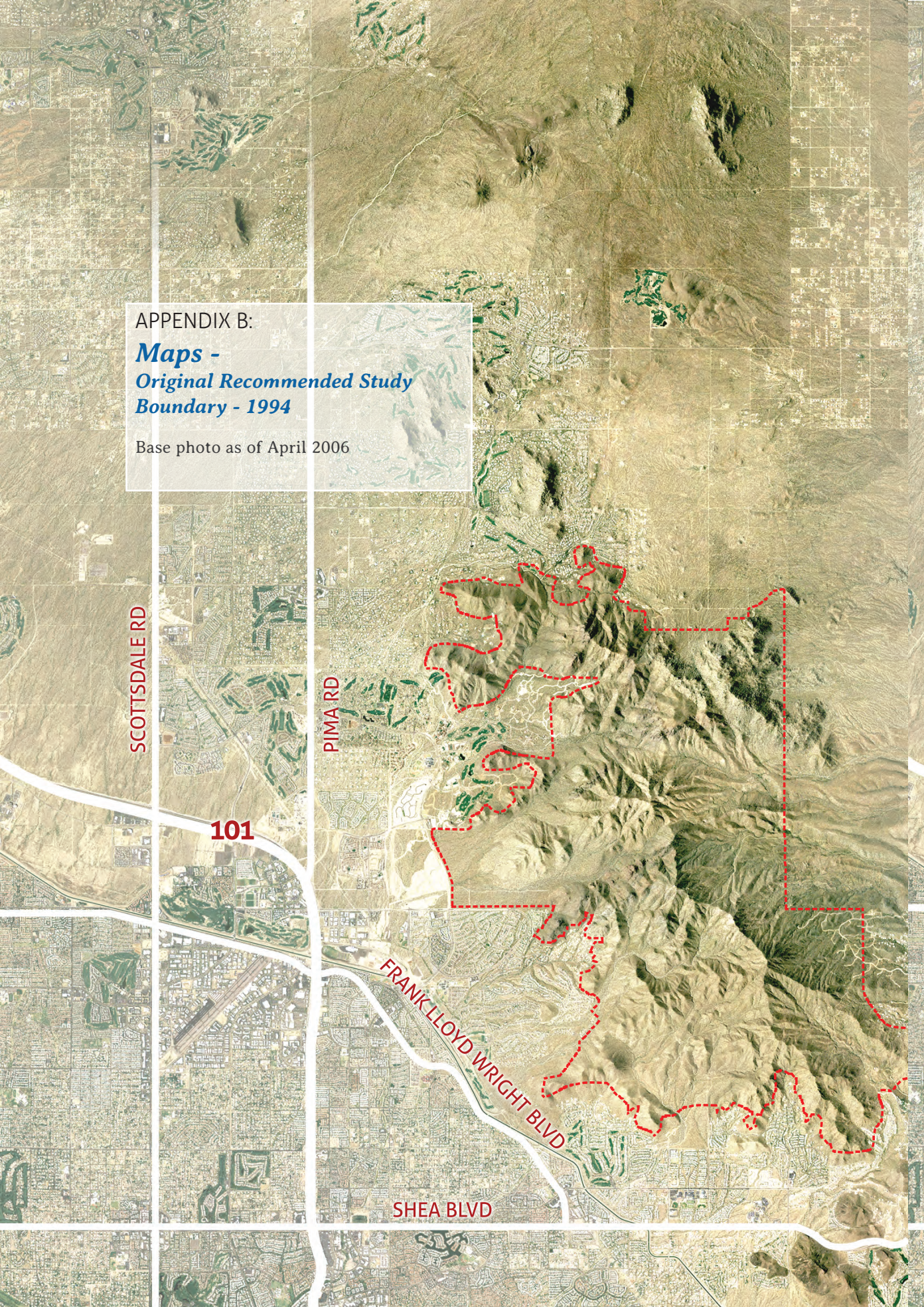
SCOTTSDALE RD

101

PIMA RD

FRANK LOYD WRIGHT BLVD

SHEA BLVD



APPENDIX B:

**Maps -
Preserve Land Acquisitions
Through 1994**

Base photo as of April 2006

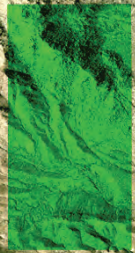
SCOTTSDALE RD

101

PIMA RD

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT BLVD

SHEA BLVD



APPENDIX B:

*Maps -
Preserve Land Acquisitions
Through 1999*

Base photo as of April 2006

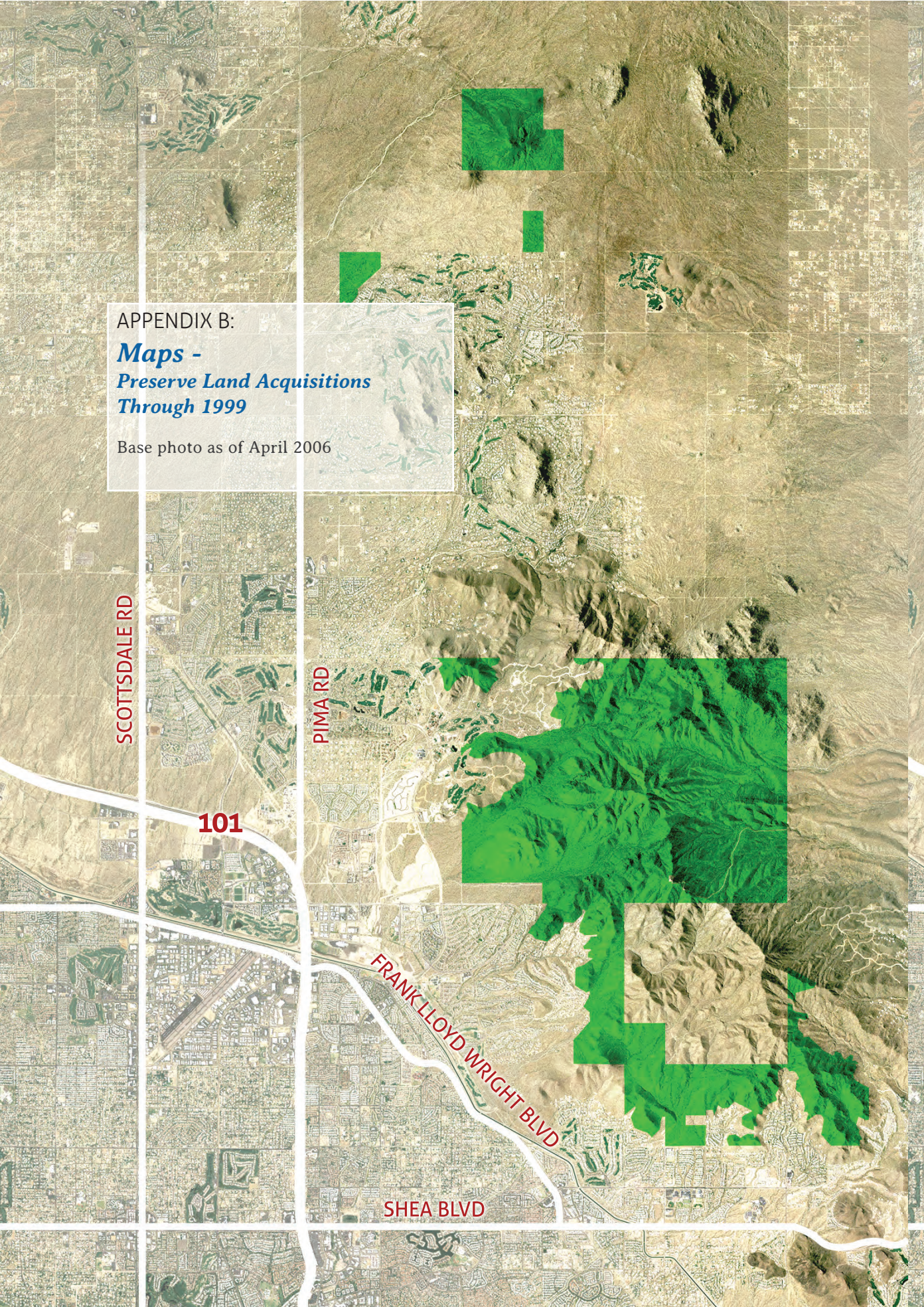
SCOTTSDALE RD

101

PIMA RD

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT BLVD

SHEA BLVD



APPENDIX B:

**Maps -
Preserve Land Acquisitions
Through 2004**

Base photo as of April 2006

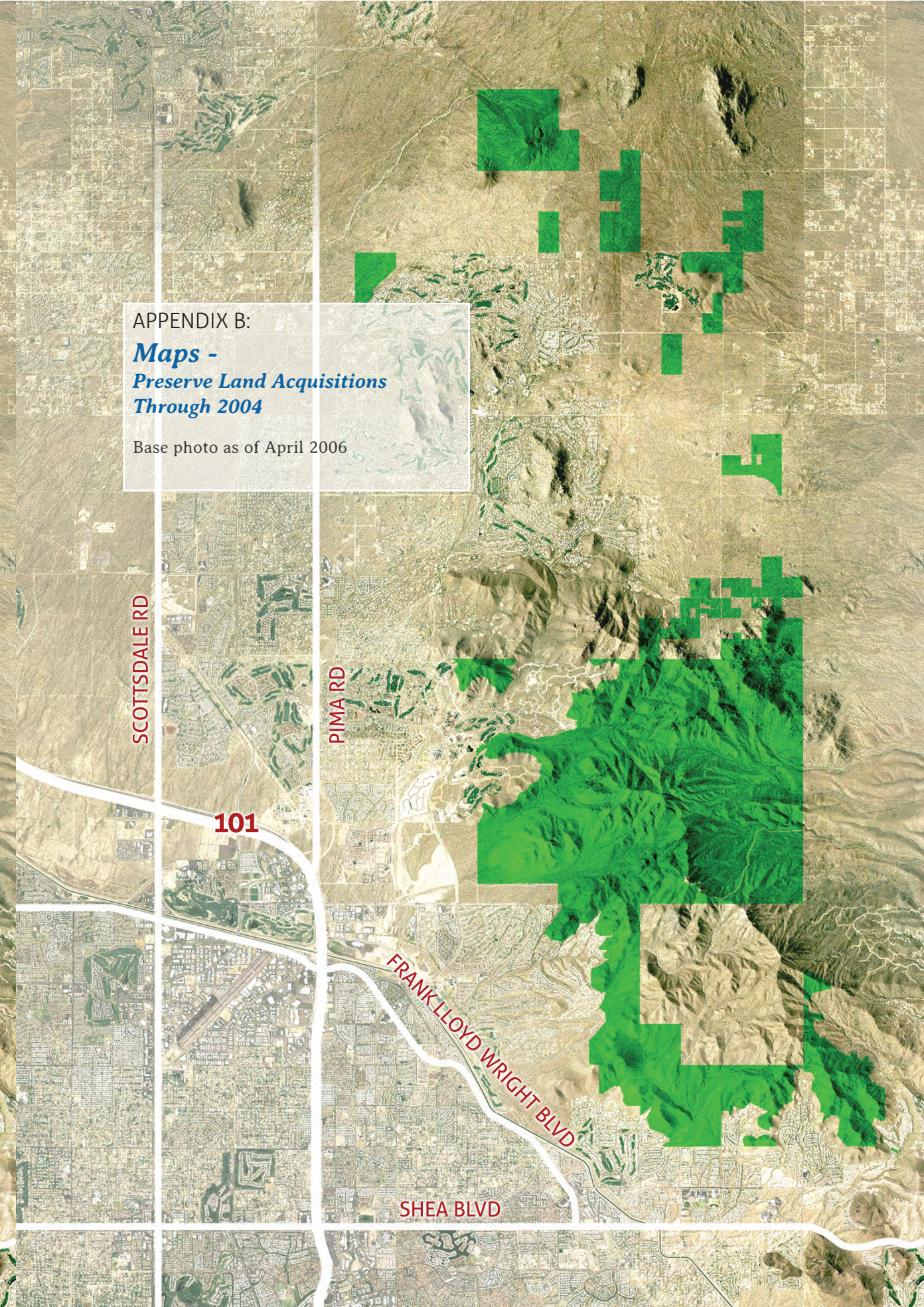
SCOTTSDALE RD

101

PIMA RD

FRANK LOYD WRIGHT BLVD

SHEA BLVD



APPENDIX B:
*Maps -
Preserve Land Acquisitions
Through 2009*

Base photo as of April 2006

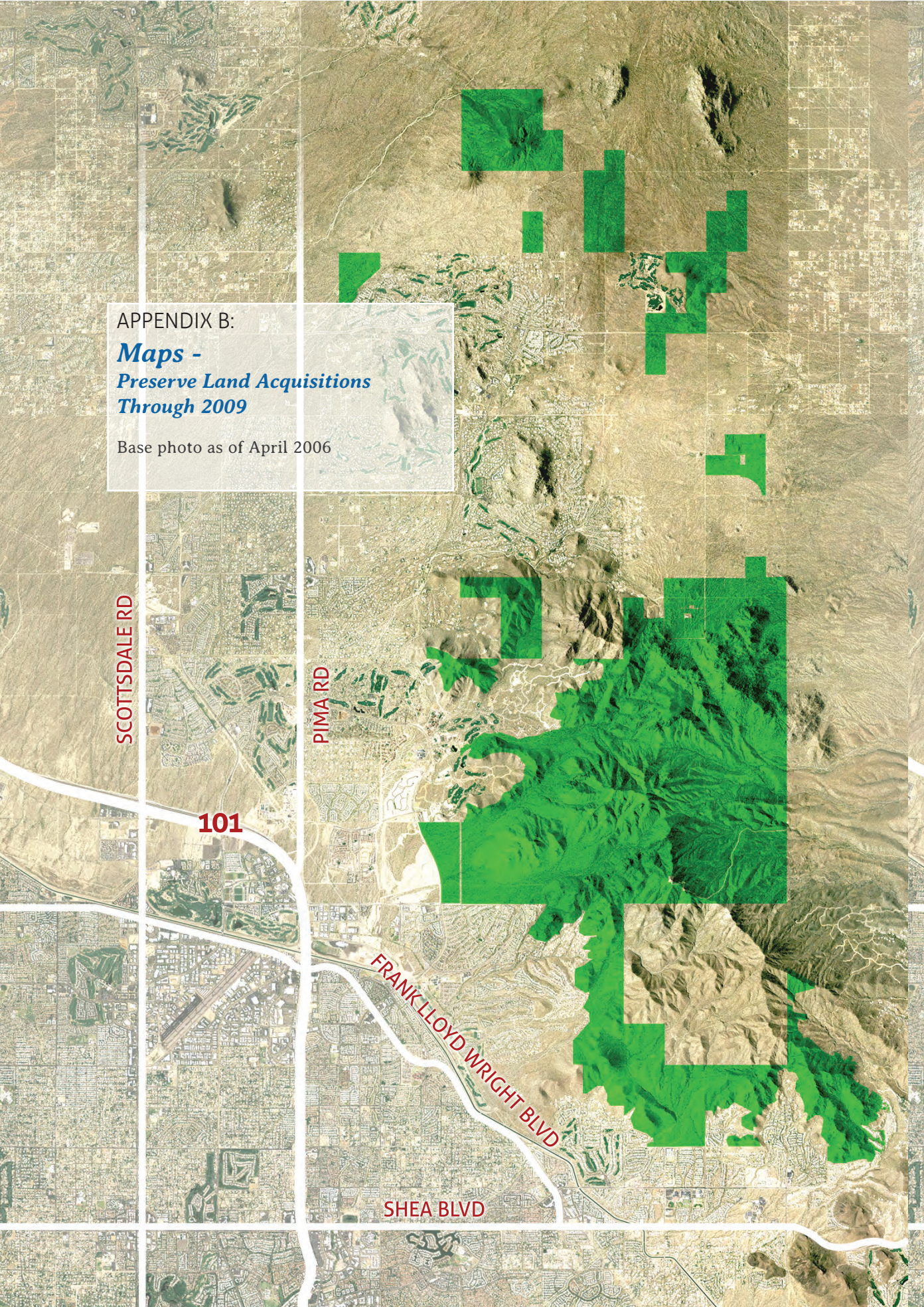
SCOTTSDALE RD

101

PIMA RD

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT BLVD

SHEA BLVD



APPENDIX B:

*Maps -
Preserve Land Acquisitions
Through 2014*

Base photo as of April 2006

SCOTTSDALE RD

101

PIMA RD

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT BLVD

SHEA BLVD



APPENDIX C:

Selected milestones in the evolution of Arizona State Trust lands:

- 1785 - Grid system was established by the U.S. Ordinance of 1785, creating a precise method of marking off Western lands into sections of one square mile, or 640 acres
- 1910 - The State Enabling Act allowed the Territory of Arizona to prepare for statehood. In addition to the previously designated section of land, the Enabling Act assigned sections 2 and 32 of each township to be held in trust for the common schools. The needs of other public institutions were considered by Congress, and through the Enabling Act, more than two million additional acres were allocated for their use.
- 1912 - Arizona Territory became the 48th state on Feb. 14.
- 1915 - “The [Arizona] State Land Department and the system by which Trust lands were to be managed were established in 1915 by the State Land Code. In compliance with the Enabling Act and the State Constitution, the State Land Code gave the Department authority over all Trust lands and the natural products from these Trust lands. Since the State Land Department’s inception, its missions have been to manage the Land Trust and to maximize its revenues for the beneficiaries.”¹ “State trust land may be disposed of only as allowed by the state Constitution and the Act; that is, it must be sold or leased for its true value, as determined by an appraisal. Furthermore, all land sales and leases for more than a 10-year period can occur only after advertisement and auction to the highest bidder, unless specifically exempted (Arizona Constitution, Article X, Section 9).”² As originally written, the law had no provision for conservation.
- 1981 - “The Urban Lands Act enabled the [State of Arizona Land] Trust to capitalize on the large increase that planning and zoning adds to raw land values.”³ With passage of the act, the State Land Department “was given new authority to plan, zone and merchandize the urban trust lands surrounding the state’s major urban population centers. As a result of this change, sale and lease of urban lands have generated the largest revenues for the trust beneficiaries.”⁴
- 1995 - In response to concerns expressed by Arizonans over land use and preservation of open space, Gov. Fife Symington conceived the Arizona Preserve Initiative, a plan which would protect vast tracts of environmentally

¹ *Arizona State Land Department Historical Overview*, www.land.state.az.us/history.htm, viewed May 3, 2010

² *“Arizona State Trust Land,: Arizona State Senate Issue Brief, Dec. 6, 2013*

³ *Arizona State Land Department Historical Overview*, www.land.state.az.us/history.htm, viewed May 3, 2010

⁴ *“Arizona State Trust Land,: Arizona State Senate Issue Brief, Dec. 6, 2013*

sensitive state trust land located throughout the state. Its objective was to preserve at least 700,000 acres of state trust land for open space.

- 1996 - On May 1, Gov. Fife Symington signed House Bill 2555, the Arizona Preserve Initiative, into law. "API provides a process for conserving trust land as open space within a jurisdiction. As part of this process, trust land may be reclassified and sold or leased through public auction. For the purposes of the API, the statute defines conservation as protection of the natural assets of state trust land for the long-term benefit of the land, the trust beneficiaries, lessees, the public and the unique resources that each area contains such as open space, scenic beauty, protected plants, wildlife, archaeology and multiple use values."⁵
- 1997 - On April 30, Arizona Gov. Fife Symington signed into law H.B. 2303, expanding the area of lands suitable for inclusion in the Arizona Preserve Initiative. Under the initiative, certain state trust lands in urban areas can be reclassified from developable land to 'land suitable for conservation purposes.' They will then be auctioned accordingly.
- 1997 - On Aug. 6, the State Land Department held a public hearing at Scottsdale's Mustang Library to receive public testimony on the City of Scottsdale's request that 2,762 acres of trust land in the McDowell Mountains be reclassified suitable for conservation.
- 1998 - In her State of the City address in January 1998, Mayor Sam Campana, along with Arizona Gov. Jane Hull, State Sen, Carolyn Allen and State Land Commissioner J. Dennis Wells, announced the reclassification as suitable for conservation under the preserve initiative of 2,762 acres of state trust land in the planned preserve boundary (all of the state trust land in the original Recommended Study Boundary, and 317 acres adjacent to Maricopa County's McDowell Mountain Regional Park, submitted by the county at the request of Scottsdale).⁶ The City of Scottsdale also submitted a petition to the State Land Department for reclassification as suitable for conservation 16,600 acres of state trust land in the expanded recommended study boundary for the preserve.⁷
- 1998 - "Laws 1998, Chapter 204, established a matching funds grant program for Arizona Preserve Initiative-eligible lands. Subsequently, Proposition 303, the Growing Smarter Act, approved by voters in 1998, authorized a \$20 million appropriation each year from the state General Fund for 11 years beginning in FY 2000-01." The appropriated monies are administered by the State Parks Board."⁸
- 2001 - On Feb. 15, Mayor Mary Manross hosted a public hearing for the Arizona State Land Department at Desert Canyon Middle School to determine if 16,600 acres of state trust land in northern Scottsdale within the study

⁵ "Arizona State Trust Land,: Arizona State Senate Issue Brief, Dec. 6, 2013

⁶ "Director's Report by Bob Cafarella," McDowell Sonoran Preserve Outlook, Summer Issue 1998

⁷ McDowell Sonoran Preserve Chronology, Scottsdale Preservation Division document, circa Aug. 21, 2000

⁸ "Arizona State Trust Land,: Arizona State Senate Issue Brief, Dec. 6, 2013

boundary should be reclassified as “suitable for conservation” under the Arizona Preserve Initiative. The McDowell Sonoran Land Trust, then headed by Executive Director Carla, spent almost two years building community partnerships and organizing a turnout of over 1,500 people – a record-shattering attendance for a preserve initiative hearing - as well as thousands of letters in support of the reclassification. On Aug. 30, State Land Commissioner Michael Anable signed an order reclassifying 78 percent of the state land (13,021 acres) within the preserve study boundary, and committed to holding off public auction on the remaining 22 percent, thereby giving Scottsdale time to explore funding options to purchase the land for the preserve.⁹

- 2002 - The City of Scottsdale and the State Land Department underwent a year-long process to update the status of the 16,600 acres of state land envisioned for the preserve on the city’s General Plan. Changes were made beneficial for the preserve vision to the fullest extent allowed under the law. All of the Arizona Preserve Initiative reclassified land appeared on Scottsdale’s General Plan, all major roads in future preserve lands were removed, along with most commercially-designated sites, and the remaining residential densities were reduced.¹⁰ The Scottsdale City Council unanimously approved the changes in Fall 2002.
- 2004 - In February, a coalition of business and community leaders, educators, environmental groups, ranchers, homebuilders and preservation advocates delivered a plan for state trust land reform to Arizona Gov. Janet Napolitano, urging the issue be on the Nov. 2, 2004 ballot.¹¹ The McDowell Sonoran Land Trust became part of a multi-year process involving a broad stakeholder group from across Arizona, advocating a comprehensive state trust land reform package.¹²
- 2006 - Much to the disappointment of Scottsdale’s preservation supporters, the November 2006 statewide ballot issue, Prop. 106 - Conserving Arizona’s Future, was narrowly defeated, making State Trust land acquisition more difficult.
- 2007 - Participants in the 91st Arizona Town Hall considered the topic “Land Use: Challenges and Choices for the 21st Century.” The diverse group of attendees recommended that state trust land reform be enacted as well as the State Land Department be provided with adequate funding and authority to become a true asset manager. Consensus was that current systems of planning and land-use regulation are inadequate to address Arizona’s rapid growth.¹³
- 2012 - Scottsdale preserve advocates, the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy and Mayor Jim Lane were among those who worked to defeat SB 1118, which would have diverted money from the Growing Smarter land preservation fund and into state parks and reforestation projects. It was defeated by the

⁹ McDowell Sonoran Conservancy website, www.mcdowellsonoran.org, viewed May 21, 2010

¹⁰ MSC History Highlights, circa 2005

¹¹ “Trust-land reform bill proposed,” *The Arizona Republic*, Feb. 28, 2004

¹² MSC History Highlights, circa 2005

¹³ *Arizona Town Hall e-newsletter*, November 2007

state legislature, 40-18. This was a second attempt by the state (Prop 301 was defeated in November 2010) to raid the fund.

- 2012 “The Arizona State Trust Land Amendment, also known as Proposition 119, was approved in Nov. 6, 2012 general election. The legislatively-referred constitutional amendment authorized the Arizona Legislature to enact a process to exchange trust land if the exchange was related to protecting military installations and managing lands. The formal title of the bill was Senate Concurrent Resolution 1001.”¹⁴
- State land reform continued to be an issue as Scottsdale’s McDowell Sonoran Preserve celebrated its 20th anniversary in October 2014.

¹⁴ *Ballotpedia.org/Arizona_State_Land_Amendment_Proposition_119_(2012)*, viewed Feb. 24, 2014

APPENDIX D:

McDowell Sonoran Preserve Awards & Accolades, 2004-2014:

- McDowell Sonoran Conservancy awarded the prestigious Valley Forward Environmental Excellence Award in 2005 for its Preserve Stewardship Program, and the President's Award for the achievements the organization has made since its founding in 1990.
- The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy was awarded the Scottsdale Area Chamber of Commerce Sterling Award for the best non-profit organization in Scottsdale for 2005. Board Chair Christine Kovach and Executive Director Carla accepted the award on behalf of the board and volunteers of the organization.
- In 2007, the Lost Dog Wash Trailhead received the top Honor Award by the American Institute of Architects, Western Mountain Region, for its sustainable design and sensitivity to the desert habitat within the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. The trailhead was also awarded the Valley Forward Environmental Excellence Crescordia Award in the Open Space and Connectivity Category.
- In its 28th Annual Environmental Awards Program in 2008 Valley Forward honored the City of Scottsdale Preserve Division, directed by Bob Cafarella, with a first place recognition. Claire Miller and Scott Hamilton were also included in the prestigious award; all three were cited for their stewardship of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. This was the first time the staff of a public agency was honored.
- Jane Rau, Carla, Carolyn Allen, Sam Campana, Virginia Korte, Vern Swaback, Chet Andrews, Nancy & Ralph Knight, Oliver Smith, Mary Manross, Les Conklin and the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy were inducted into the Scottsdale History Hall of Fame in large part for their efforts to create and sustain the McDowell Sonoran Preserve (they joined Art DeCabooter and Florence Nelson, who had been inducted in 1999 and 2000).
- McDowell Sonoran Land Trust/Conservancy co-founder and perennial preservation advocate Jane Rau was honored in 2008 with a Hon Kachina Award for her lifetime of volunteer work and leadership. She was also named the Land Trust Alliance's National Conservation Volunteer of the Year.
- The Gateway Trailhead at Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve received a 'platinum' designation, the highest certification possible through the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program in 2010.
- The Arizona Disability Advocacy Coalition presented the City of Scottsdale, in partnership with the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy, an award for the McDowell Sonoran Preserve's Bajada Nature Trail in 2010. It won in the category of "AA Title II – State and Local Government Justice and Equality Liberty Award."

- Scottsdale Boy Scout Brad Garr was named the 2010 Arizona Game and Fish Commission's Youth Environmentalist, and was presented the William T Hornaday Silver Medal by Sen. Jon Kyl for conservation projects he conducted in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve.
- The Cultural Landscape Foundation recognized Jane Rau for her help in preserving "thousands of acres of Sonoran Desert." In the foundation's "Landslide 2011," Rau was commended for educating "public officials, citizens and the private sector, helping to establish a system of open spaces in the desert."
- *Sunset Magazine* included Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve in its "Saved! Sunset Environmental Awards 2012" feature in the March 2012 issue of the nationally-distributed magazine.
- The Arizona Forward Association honored Scottsdale's Tom's Thumb Trailhead with its 2013 Crescordia Award, citing it as a "remarkably sustainable civic building that charters new territory not just for its environmental integration, but for its self-sufficiency, as the site is not connected to conventional municipal infrastructure. Fucello Architects and Redden Construction were also included in the honor. The Via Dona Trail, which connects neighborhoods to the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, was also honored receiving an Award of Merit. Okanogan Trails Construction, Coffman Studio and Jack Gilcrest Landscape Architect shared the award with the City of Scottsdale.
- The Tom's Thumb Trailhead earned an Award of Honor at the American Institute of Architects Arizona Design Awards, who applauded its sustainable design remote from municipal city infrastructure: "Through responsible environmental planning and design, this project exemplifies a commitment by Scottsdale and its citizens in achieving environmental stewardship."
- The Brown's Ranch Trailhead earned a 2014 Arizona Forward Crescordia Award for environmental excellence. The project was recognized for its design, which blends into the Sonoran Desert terrain and its renewable energy systems, which make it a "net zero energy" facility. The awards brochure stated: "This sensitive project illustrates how innovative design, careful construction and a community committed to habitat, history and landform preservation can create a major recreational and educational trailhead that respects the environment." Scottsdale-based Weddle-Gilmore Architects led a team that conducted extensive input from preserve users to design the facility.
- The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy received a 2014 Arizona Forward Crescordia Award in the environmental education/communication category. The conservancy's McDowell Sonoran Field Institute project, with its citizen-scientist efforts to better understand the preserve's environment and to educate the community about its importance, was cited as exemplary.

APPENDIX E:

History of Citizen Votes

ELECTION DATE	PROPOSITION QUESTION	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	RESULTS	
			YES	NO
May 23, 1995	Prop 400	Established the .2% sales tax for up to 30 years to acquire land for preservation	12,873	7,204
September 10, 1996	Prop 404	Approved the sale of revenue bonds	14,675	5,258
November 3, 1998	Prop 410	Charter amendment to bar the sale of Preserve properties without public vote	39,429	9,340
	Prop 411	Add 19,400 acres to the Recommended Study Boundary, and authorized the expenditure of the dedicated sales tax to acquire land in the expanded boundary	33,934	14,738
September 7, 1999	Question 1	Authorized the sale of \$200 million GO bonds for the purchase of land for the Preserve	25,573	7,499
May 18, 2004	Question 1	Established an additional .15% sales tax for up to 30 years to acquire land and provide appropriate public access	17,196	14,339
	Question 2	Authorized up to \$500 million in GO bonds to acquire land for the Preserve and to construct access area improvements	18,285	13,215

APPENDIX F:

Trailheads as of October 2014

Download trail maps at ScottsdaleAZ.gov/preserve/maps

NAME	ADDRESS	LAT./LONG.	AMENITIES
BROWN'S RANCH TRAILHEAD	30301 N. Alma School Parkway Scottsdale, AZ 85262	33° 45' 41.70"N 111° 50' 32.06"W	Parking, restrooms, shade ramadas, interpretive signage, water, horse trailer parking, hitching rails, water trough, accessible Jane Rau Nature Trail
FRAESFIELD TRAILHEAD	13400 East Rio Verde Drive Scottsdale, AZ 85262	33° 44' 36.98"N 111° 47' 35.21"W	Parking, Horse Trailer Parking Drinking water is NOT available.
GATEWAY TRAILHEAD	18333 N. Thompson Peak Parkway Scottsdale, AZ 85255	33° 38' 56.23"N 111° 51' 32.96"W	The largest of the trailheads includes: parking, restrooms, shade ramadas, water, accessible Bajada Nature Trail, horse-trailer parking, hitching rails, water trough, interpretive signage.
GRANITE MOUNTAIN TRAILHEAD	31402 N. 136th St. Scottsdale, AZ 85262	33° 46' 12.52"N 111° 47' 18.14"W	Parking, Horse Trailer Parking Drinking water is NOT available.
LOST DOG WASH TRAILHEAD	12601 N. 124th St. Scottsdale, AZ 85259	33° 35' 58.75"N 111° 48' 46.77"W	Parking, restrooms, shade ramadas, water, horse-trailer parking, hitching rails, water trough, directional signage, accessible nature trail.
QUARTZ TRAILHEAD	10215 E. McDowell Mountain Ranch Road Scottsdale, AZ 85255	33° 37' 37.62"N 111° 51' 23.55"W	Located at the SW corner of McDowell Mountain Ranch Rd. and 104th St. Parking: Access the Preserve via the Quartz Trail. Drinking water is NOT available.
RINGTAIL TRAILHEAD	12300 block of North 128th Street Scottsdale, AZ 85259	33° 35' 56.38"N 111° 48' 17.21"W	Limited parking in undeveloped area on west side of 128th St. north of Cactus Rd. Drinking water is NOT available.

Trailheads as of October 2014 - Continued

Download trail maps at ScottsdaleAZ.gov/preserve/maps

NAME	ADDRESS	LAT./LONG.	AMENITIES
SUNRISE TRAILHEAD	12101 N. 145th Way Scottsdale, AZ 85259	33° 35' 45.72"N 111° 46' 3.9"W	Parking, water, directional signage, limited horse-trailer parking, hitching rails, water trough, shade ramada (overflow lot)
TOM'S THUMB TRAILHEAD	23015 N. 128th St. Scottsdale, AZ 85255	33° 41' 21.29"N 111° 48' 5.305"W	Parking, restrooms, shade ramada, horse trailer parking, interpretive and directional signs. Drinking water is NOT available.
WESTWORLD TRAILHEAD	15939 N. 98th St. Scottsdale, AZ 85260	33° 37' 50.1"N 111° 52' 11.57"W	Horse-trailer parking, water trough, shade ramada, restrooms, public arenas, directional signage. Access the Preserve via the WestWorld trail to the Quartz or Taliesin Trails.
104TH/BELL RD. TRAILHEAD	North Side of Bell Road at 104th Street Scottsdale, AZ 85255	33° 38' 25.62"N 111° 51' 23.88"W	Limited parking. Drinking water is NOT available.

APPENDIX G:

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PERSONAL INTERVIEWS; ORAL HISTORIES:

The Honorable Carolyn Allen, retired State Senator (and Representative), 2010

Chet Andrews, former MSLT Chair, MSPC Commissioner, #1 Steward, 2011

Dick Bowers, former Scottsdale City Manager, 2000 and 2013

Drew Brown, DMB Associates, 2010

E.O. Brown, grandson of Scottsdale pioneer E.O. Brown; son of E.E. Brown, 2000

Virgie Lutes Brown, widow of Alvin "Cotton" Brown and daughter of Carlton and Lucy Lutes, 2000

Robert J. "Bob" Cafarella, City of Scottsdale Preservation Director, 2000 and 2010

The Honorable [Kathryn] Sam Campana, Mayor of Scottsdale (1996-2000), 2000, 2010, 2013

Carla (her full legal name), former Executive Director, MSLT, 2000, 2010, 2013

Ruthie Carll, former Executive Director, MSC, 2010

Leslie Dashew, MSC board member and founder of Sonoran Desert Women, 2013

The Honorable Ross Dean, former Scottsdale City Councilman, 2010

Dr. Art DeCabooter, former Scottsdale Community College president, former Scottsdale Chamber of Commerce president, first MSP Commission chair, 2010

The Honorable Wayne Ecton, former Scottsdale City Councilman, 2010

Kroy Ekblaw, preserve director, long-time city planner

Con Englehorn, former chair, MSC

Bill Ensign, retired City Parks & Recreation Director, former MSLT chair, 2010

Steve Fleming and Roy Kinsey, Fountain Hills preserve advocates, 2013

Bob Frost, retired Scottsdale Community Services General Manager, MSPC Commissioner, 2014

Melinda Gulick, DMB and former MSC chair and MSPC commissioner, 2010

Don Hadder, City of Scottsdale long-range planner (since 1976), 2010

Scott Hamilton, Preserve Division planner, 2010

Liz Hildenbrand, City Parks & Recreation Department, 2013

Kristen Jaskie, Middle school student member of 1990s MSLT board, 2010

The Honorable Bill Jenkins, Mayor of Scottsdale (1974 to 1980), 2000

The Honorable Suzanne Klapp, member, Scottsdale City Council, 2010

Virginia Korte, then-Director, Center for Native and Urban Wildlife, Scottsdale Community College, 2000; and again in 2010

Christine Kovach, then-banking executive, twice chair of MSLT/MSC, 2010

The Honorable Jim Lane, Mayor of Scottsdale (2009-present), 2013

The Honorable Robert Littlefield, Scottsdale City Councilman, 2010

The Honorable Mary Manross, Mayor of Scottsdale (2000-2009), 2010

Len Marcisz, former MSC chair and Master Steward, 2013

Yvonne Massman, City Parks recreation leader, 2010

Claire Miller, Preserve Manager since 1999

Jerry Miller, former MSPC Commissioner, MSC Steward, 2010

Mike Nolan, MSC Executive Director, 2013

The Honorable Robert Pettycrew, former Scottsdale City Councilman, 2010

Jane Rau, co-founder, McDowell Sonoran Land Trust/McDowell Sonoran Conservancy, 2000, 2010

Laurie Roberts, columnist, *The Arizona Republic*, 2010

Rachel Sacco, president/CEO, Scottsdale Convention & Visitors Bureau, 2013

The Honorable William P. Schrader, Mayor of Scottsdale, (1962-64) 2000

Robbin Schweitzer, Preserve Division, 2013

Tom Silverman, hotel owner and former Scottsdale City Councilman, 2013

Oliver Smith, business leader and former MSC board chair, 2013

Vern Swaback, architect, Scottsdale Visioning leader, co-chair of Desert Preservation Task Force, 2010

Del Jeanne Palmer West, daughter of K.T. Palmer, 2000

Susan Wheeler, business leader, equestrian and preserve advocate, 2014

Greg Woodall, archaeologist, 2000 and 2011