

# Mountain Lines

Summer 2014



## Chasing Maverick

Mountain bike trails for  
all ages and abilities

## The New Conservation Model

MSC leads the way

## Trailside Preserve Geology

See quartz outcrops and shear zones



McDowell Sonoran  
CONSERVANCY.



Mike Nolan, Executive Director

McDowell Sonoran Conservancy is a unique model of a public-private partnership managing natural lands, and our work is

garnering attention from across the country. Land managers nationwide confront decreasing revenues and staff resources while facing increased challenges to protect and manage their lands. By developing cooperative and partnership relationships with other organizations, MSC may export our best practices to help others develop similar volunteer programs. Throughout this issue we describe the MSC model, and how we reach out to some of our partners.

The work of exporting our practices has already begun. The publication of “The Flora and Fauna of Scottsdale’s McDowell Sonoran Preserve” combined with recent presentations around the state by our Field Institute staff and stewards have raised awareness the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy’s Citizen

Science program. As a result, several public land managers have expressed interest in how MSC uses volunteers to accomplish high level research.

Other land managers have contacted us to learn more about our overall steward program, seeking to learn how we train, organize, and deploy volunteers to patrol and maintain trails, greet visitors at trailheads, organize and lead hikes, and more.

What makes MSC’s steward program unique is the wide variety of tasks our volunteers complete, the high level of training many are willing to undertake, and the significant amount of self-direction, organization, and decision-making authority that volunteers exercise.

This issue of Mountain Lines continues our practice of creating an all-electronic version to more easily reach our stewards and supporters who travel to other parts of the world each summer. We’re trying some new things with this issue by embedding links to further enhance the content. Let us know what you think! 🐦

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Cover photo: Heading south on Lost Dog Wash. Photo by: B. McFarland

## About Us

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

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## Opening of the Jane Rau Trail

By Peggy McNamara  
 McDowell Sonoran Conservancy steward and  
 McDowell Sonoran Field Institute citizen scientist

Our newest jewel in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve is the Jane Rau\* Trail that was dedicated on March 22, 2014. It’s nestled in the desert at the Brown’s Ranch Trailhead. Walk just a few steps from the parking lot and you are immersed in this trail’s quiet desert surroundings.

The Jane Rau trail follows an ephemeral wash up a gently graded path through a forest of saguaros and lush desert vegetation. Along the way, broad vistas of the Valley and distant mountains are visible, as well as nearby Brown and Cone mountains. Nevertheless, some sections of the trail are so secluded that signs of civilization are no longer visible. A bridge spans the wash at the highest point along the trail where a large outcrop of boulders sits on a nearby hilltop. The trail turns there to meander back on the other side of the wash.

Along the way, occasional benches provide comfortable places to contemplate the landscape and interpretive signs

with beautiful photographs describe the flora, fauna and geology of the area.

This beautiful trail is an accessible half-mile, barrier-free, 80-inch wide path with a firm and stable surface. It has a maximum grade of 11 percent and neither bicycles nor horses are permitted on it. So walking this lovely trail is more like a stroll than a hike. The nearby trailhead ramada provides water, shade and facilities. It’s a wonderful place to bring kids, strollers, and people with canes, walkers and wheelchairs. Go enjoy this trail for a great desert experience and even wear your street shoes if you like. 🐦

*\*Jane Rau is a dedicated activist who with a handful of others started working in 1990 to preserve the desert in the area of the McDowell Mountains from development. Their work resulted in a permanently protected sustainable Sonoran Desert habitat of more than 30,000 acres we know today as the McDowell Sonoran Preserve.*

Jane Rau (rt.) taking inaugural hike on Jane Rau Trail. Photo by: M. Jensen





# The New Conservation Model: How and Why MSC Became the Expert

By Jace McKeighan  
McDowell Sonoran Conservancy lead steward

**T**he story behind the new conservation model is based on a unique public-private partnership for urban preserve management. How and why the [McDowell Sonoran Conservancy](#) (MSC) became the expert in that model is in many ways the story of MSC itself. MSC developed the model with the City of Scottsdale and became the expert because it had to in order to make the McDowell Sonoran Preserve a reality. It was born out of necessity, and developed by an incredibly dedicated and talented group of citizens. It is a story that is only just beginning.

## Development of the New Conservation Model

You've probably heard MSC's origin story before. However, that story takes on new meaning when you consider that the growth of both MSC and the Preserve is not just a local success story, but the story of the growth and development of a completely new model for urban conservation and management relying upon a public-private partnership.

In 1991, a group of 13 concerned citizens formed MSC with the goal of preserving the McDowell Mountains and surrounding Sonoran Desert at a time when development in Scottsdale was skyrocketing. They quickly realized that private donations would not be sufficient to acquire large parcels of land, so they approached the City of Scottsdale for support. They asked the City to develop a preservation plan for the McDowell Mountains, and the City did just that.



Hikers learning about conservation first hand. Photo by: Steve Dodd

In 1994, Scottsdale acquired its first parcel of land, five square miles, in what is now the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. Public support followed when Scottsdale voters approved sales taxes on two separate occasions to fund additional land acquisition. Land acquisition, however, was only one piece of the puzzle. The Preserve required management and boots on the ground. The management required represented a potentially significant budgetary expense that could have chilled preservation and conservation activities.

In 1998, mindful of both the potential maintenance expense and public concern regarding that expense, MSC

developed the concept of the steward – a volunteer trained to help take care of the Preserve. MSC then created a formal steward education program, and graduated the first steward class. Sadly, steward number one – Chet Andrews – passed away in April of this year after years of dedicated service. Whether they knew it or not, Chet and those who followed him were on the leading edge of a new conservation model.

Today, the City of Scottsdale-owned Preserve has grown to over 30,000 acres, constitutes nearly one-third of the entire area of Scottsdale, and represents one of the largest urban nature preserves in the world. Starting as an advocacy

group focused on preservation, MSC has grown into a conservation organization focused on Preserve stewardship and environmental education. Led by a volunteer board of directors and a small staff, MSC is now a dynamic organization of more than 500 trained stewards who have devoted over 250,000 hours of their time to the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. MSC stewards provide a wide variety of services relating to the care and maintenance of the Preserve itself. Among them, stewards patrol every mile of the Preserve trails on a regular basis to inspect them for damage, provide information to users, and aid when necessary. Steward construction and maintenance crews maintain the trails, making repairs caused by both ordinary wear and by storms, as reported by MSC's storm watch patrols. MSC Pathfinders and Nature Guides man the trailheads, providing information to users about the Preserve and its flora, fauna, and geology. The Hike program offers guided public hikes

in the Preserve the whole year round. Outside of the Preserve, the Conservancy maintains a Public Speakers Bureau that offers presentations on a wide variety of Preserve-related topics to the public. The Steward Education team not only runs new steward orientations, but also continuing education programs open to stewards and the public. Programs cover natural history, geology, human history, and other scientific and historical topics related to the Preserve. They have even developed lessons for a fourth grade science curriculum using the Preserve as a source of study.

Obviously, it would be quite expensive for a municipality to provide all of these services for free. Indeed, the very idea of that expense could have derailed the Preserve altogether. Rather than allow that to happen, the partnership between the City of Scottsdale and MSC allowed dedicated citizens to fill the gaps and make the Preserve not

just a reality, but also a stunning success and a national model for urban nature conservation. The relationship between MSC and the City of Scottsdale was formalized in a written contractual agreement in December 2011. This agreement solidifies the Conservancy's position as the City's primary partner in protecting, promoting and managing the Preserve. It also solidifies the foundation of the new conservation model. This is the model that was created to save the McDowell Mountains. In the process, MSC trail-blazed a public-private partnership model that groups throughout the United States now seek to emulate.

### The Future of MSC and the New Conservation Model

MSC became an expert in the public-private management of an urban nature preserve out of necessity, but its innovation did not end there. In order to truly fulfill its mission, MSC recognized that it needed to become an expert on the Pre-



Getting ready for a Brown's Ranch tour. Photo by: M. Jensen

serve itself. Specifically, MSC asked itself a very basic question - how can the Preserve be properly managed and maintained without knowing everything about the Preserve? MSC's answer was to create another unique venture - the McDowell Sonoran Field Institute. The Field Institute is now the research center of MSC. Its mission is to study the environment of the Preserve, as well as its human history and human impacts. It does this by partnering with scientists (known as Principal Investigators) and actively involving volunteers, both stewards and non-stewards, in research as citizen scientists. Research results are used for long-term resource management, education, and to contribute to the broader scientific knowledge of natural areas.

In conjunction with the Field Institute, MSC also initiated the volunteer Citizen-Science program, which offers specialized training for volunteers interested in participating in Field Institute research projects with the Principal Investigators.

Citizen-Science program volunteers do field work, data entry, basic analysis, mapping, and other tasks under staff or scientific supervision. Once again, in order to meet a critical need, MSC found a way to utilize its volunteers in ways not previously considered for the ultimate benefit of the Preserve.

The Field Institute recently published the results of the first comprehensive flora and fauna survey of the Preserve, which is available at MSC's website. Ongoing projects focus on various aspects of human impact, including the effect of trail traffic on physical trail characteristics and nearby vegetation, the impact of development along the wildland-urban interface, and monitoring restoration sites to assess alternative approaches. All the baseline and human impact research data, gathered largely by Field Institute volunteers, will be incorporated into an Ecological Resource Plan for the Preserve to assist

## Creation of the Preserve Bottom Line – The Perfect Storm

Beginning in the 1980's and continuing through to the present time, government leaders, the business community, Scottsdale concerned citizens, and rank and file Scottsdale voters saw the new wave of preservation and committed to make it a reality.

As a result of this work, Scottsdale has approximately 30,000 acres of Sonoran desert and McDowell Mountain lands preserved for eternity inside its city boundaries. The total comprises about 30 percent of Scottsdale's land area.

A wide variety of people, often with different goals, thoughtfully working together for the long term good – priceless.

Stewards and guests discuss the history of the Preserve with Mayor Jim Lane.. Photo by: D. Bierman



## Creation of the Preserve Bottom Line – Financial Summary

### 1995

Voters of Scottsdale approve a sales tax of 0.2% to begin the land acquisitions and bring the idea of the Preserve to reality.

### 1999

Bonding authority for the Preserve was created, which greatly increased the capability of purchasing land more quickly.

### 2004

Voters of Scottsdale approve an additional sales tax of 0.15% to accelerate the creation of access points and access area amenities such as trailheads, parking lots, rest rooms and educational facilities.

### 2013

Sales taxes between 1995 and 2013 generated \$420,000 for the Preserve.

# Watchable Wildlife: Plants and Animals of the Desert Thrive Within Their Niches

By Susan Aufheimer  
McDowell Sonoran Conservancy steward and  
Field Institute citizen scientist



Kangaroo rats forage at night in the desert. Photo by: M. Jensen

Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve is a thriving ecosystem filled with plants and animals that depend on the land and on each other to survive. Each organism occupies a special niche in the desert ecosystem. We might feel sorry for life that must endure such a hot, dry place, but our sympathy is misplaced because every desert organism was born to live exactly where it is.

Take the mighty saguaro, which grows only in the Sonoran Desert. Most of its roots grow four to six inches deep and radiate out as far as the cactus is tall. This pattern allows the cactus to absorb as much water as possible during infrequent rains. Its skin is covered with a waxy coating that waterproofs the plant and keeps it from drying out. The saguaro provides shelter and nesting opportunity for woodpeckers, which drill holes in the cactus high enough for the saguaro's needles to protect them from climbing predators. Nectar from the saguaro's flowers feeds bats and bees, which in turn pollinate its flowers. Soon its flowers give way to bright-red fruit for birds and other animals to eat and later spread the saguaro's seeds. The saguaro thrives in its own niche, and nowhere else.

You wouldn't be doing a kangaroo rat any favors, either, by removing it from its desert niche. A kangaroo rat can survive its entire lifetime without ever drinking water because it gets what it needs from seeds and mesquite beans. This little fellow spends his day underground where he avoids the summer heat, and comes out to feed at night when the desert is cooler. He has evolved with excellent hearing that can even detect an approaching owl. And he can jump up to nine feet to escape predators such as snakes, bobcats, and coyotes. Even so, as cute as he is, he is a delightful snack for many animals in his niche.

Life in the desert may seem hard to you, but you weren't born to live your entire lifetime without water, nor do you have a waxy coating to keep water from evaporating from your body. Our niche is our house that keeps us cool, our supermarkets that provide food, and the desert itself that renews our spirit and blesses us with the beauty of springtime flowers and the grand vistas of ancient mountains. 🐦

# The McDowell Sonoran Field Institute: A Year of Transition

By Melanie Tluczek  
McDowell Sonoran Field Institute Manager

This has been an exciting year for the McDowell Sonoran Field Institute, the Conservancy's research center. This year marked a critical transition from surveys to increasingly complex research that will allow us to focus our conservation efforts. It's been a challenge, but the citizen science program has stepped up to make it happen.

At this time last year, the Field Institute was completing a survey of the flora and fauna of the Preserve. The objective was to understand exactly what plants and animals make the Preserve their home. After three years of counting reptiles, pressing plants, and measuring mice tails, the Field Institute published a full report on the Preserve flora and fauna.

The next step was to use the survey information and draw on the expertise of our scientific partners to understand the condition of our resources. To do this, we convened a science advisory committee; a group of scientists and subject matter experts who aid the Field Institute in interpreting our data, developing monitoring programs, and creating a long-term plan for our natural resources.

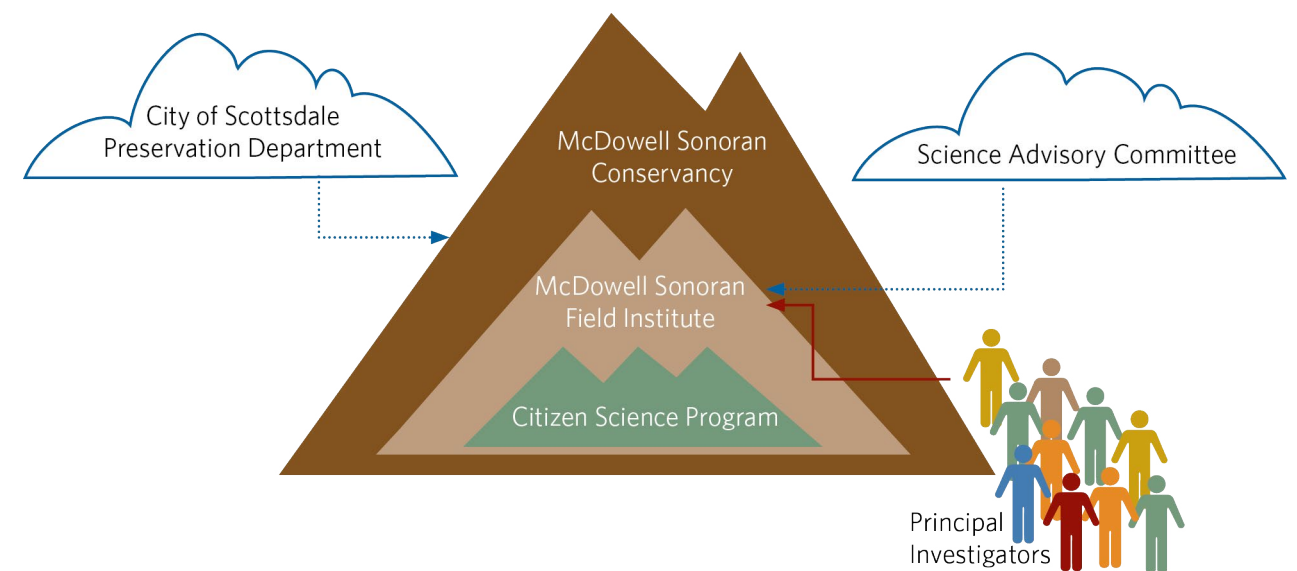
The long-term plan is called the Ecological Resource Plan (ERP). This is a joint effort between the Field Institute and the City of Scottsdale to define scientifically-based goals and objectives for taking care of the ecological resources of the Preserve. The ERP will

be continually updated as we gather more information from our studies.

None of this would be possible without the citizen science program. The dedication and talent of our stewards has evolved it into an organized, focused program that can support the changing research needs of the Field Institute. Citizen science program members collect data, organize fieldwork, train other volunteers, analyze data, write educational materials, and even lead research projects, such as the Lost Dog Geology Study and the PastFinders Stoneman Road Investigation. The level of involvement of volunteers in research is what makes this program truly unique. 🐦

## How the Field Institute fits inside the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy

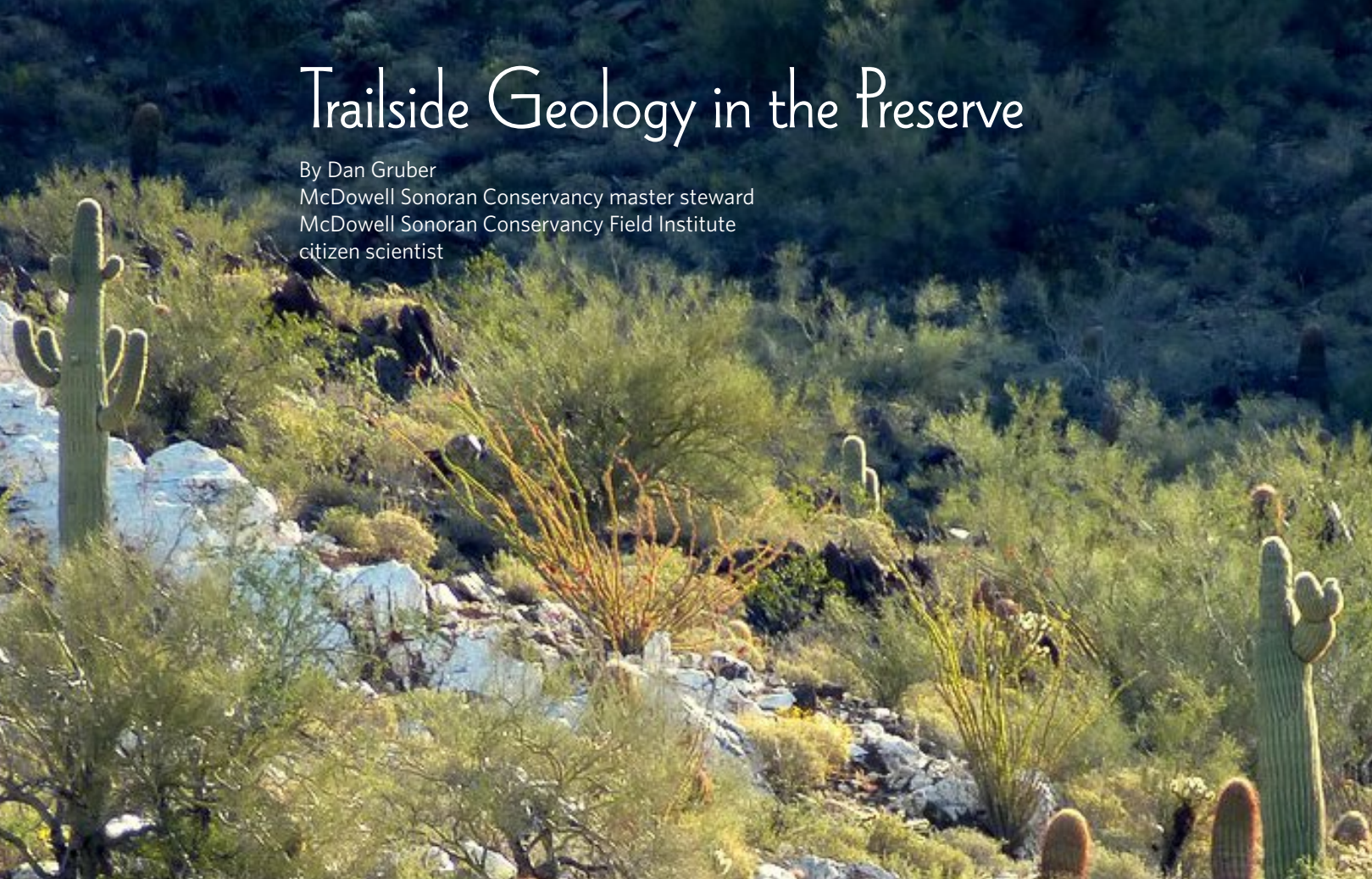
The graphic below shows how the Field Institute, citizen science program, and the science advisory committee fit together.





# Trailside Geology in the Preserve

By Dan Gruber  
McDowell Sonoran Conservancy master steward  
McDowell Sonoran Conservancy Field Institute  
citizen scientist



Mysterious white quartz outcropping in the McDowells. Photo by: D. Gruber

The Preserve has a complex geologic history stretching back almost two billion years. Most of the rocks in the McDowell Mountains formed about 1.7 billion years ago during the growth of an ancient continent. In that process, sedimentary and volcanic rocks near the coast changed into the beautiful dark gray and gray-green, sharp-edged metamorphic rocks we see today.

About 1.4 billion years ago, magma from Earth's interior welled up underneath the older metamorphic rocks, was trapped there, and slowly cooled into the rounded, coarse-grained, light-colored granite exposed today on East End and Tom's Thumb in the northeast McDowell Mountains and in the smaller mountains in the Preserve's northern area.

On Brown's Mountain in the north, the visible layers are deposits of lava and

ash from volcanic activity in the area 15 - 25 million years ago. More recent geologic processes formed the mountains in the Preserve and in much of the Southwest. The mountains are geologically young even though the rock in them is old.

Here are two interesting geologic features that are visible along Preserve trails: quartz outcrops and shear zones.

## Quartz Outcrops

The quartz outcrops are a mystery. We know what the features are but we're not sure when and how they formed.

There's beautiful milky-white quartz throughout the Preserve. There are quartz fragments along many trails, veins of it running through boulders, and huge outcrops visible on mountainsides. The only large outcrop that's

directly accessible is on a short but extremely steep spur that climbs above the Quartz Trail about one-half mile north of its junction with the Lost Dog Wash Trail.

These veins probably were deposited by hydrothermal ("hot water") activity. Water under great pressure underground can be heated far above the boiling point by volcanic or magmatic heat and remain liquid. Tremendous amounts of material can dissolve into these very hot liquids. Such "superheated" solutions can flow into small open spaces or even fracture solid rock by hydraulic pressure. When the water evaporates, the previously dissolved substances precipitate out as solid material that fills up the spaces, usually in sheet-like structures that we see at the surface as veins or outcrops.

So we know what these features are and how they usually form, but nobody

knows when they formed here or the source of the heat that made the process work. The McDowell Sonoran Field Institute is conducting a citizen-science project with geologist Brian Gootee of the Arizona Geological Survey to shed light on these questions. Look for some potentially "groundbreaking" results from this project by year-end.

## Shear Zones

We know more about the second trail-side feature, shear zones, but there still are unanswered questions awaiting future research.

The southern Preserve is crossed by several extended shear zones where the rock was subjected to forces in different directions. If this happens in solid rock the result is a fault, a break in the rock with relative displacement between the two sides. In ductile (soft) rock, the result usually is distorted rock called foliated mylonite.

Mylonite is rock that has been deformed or stretched. This is seen in the shapes of the tiny grains forming the rock, but sometimes it's also visible to the eye as distorted areas within larger rocks. Often these distorted areas are lenticular and are called "augens", German for eye.

Foliation is layering in metamorphic rocks. The layered matter can range from thousandths of a millimeter to more than a meter thick. Thinly foliated rocks are visible on many Preserve trails including Sunrise near the peak, Gateway Loop, Quartz, and the Lookout. Look for rocks that resemble tattered books resting on their spines with the pages slightly open.

You can see a shear zone running along and south of the Ringtail Trail in the area between the intersection with the Old Jeep Trail and Lost Dog

Overlook. Near the intersection, the old road cut has revealed rocks with augens. Along the trail itself, well worn but visibly foliated rock makes up some of the tread surface. South of the trail, you can glimpse some standing slabs of foliated rock running in an east-west line.

Based on previous geology work done by the Field Institute and others, we think this shear zone developed when the rock formed about 1.7 billion years ago. More work is needed to confirm this, to map all the shear zones that run through the Preserve, and to relate them to similar features elsewhere in the Valley.

Other interesting geologic features are visible from preserve trails. Some are discussed in MSC's Field Guide to the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, an excellent companion for your hiking trips.

Shear zone rocks tell a history of conflicting forces. Photo by: D. Gruber



# Chasing Maverick

By Jace McKeighan  
McDowell Sonoran Conservancy lead steward



**M**avericks (plural) is a famous big wave surfing spot off the northern California coast offering excitement and adventure to those willing to risk their lives surfing 40-foot waves. Maverick (singular) is a trail in the Brown's Ranch area of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. Maverick – the trail, not the surf spot – offers excitement and adventure to mountain bikers, but does not require risking one's life in the process. In fact, Maverick offers something for everyone.

According to the [Outdoor Industry Foundation](#), which tracks outdoor recreation and publishes an annual Outdoor Recreation Participation Study, nearly 40 million people engage in some form of mountain biking annually. From experience, I can tell you that those bikers are as diverse as our communities themselves. Too often, the term “mountain biker” only conjures images of a young man flying down a trail on the very edge of control. However, I regularly see people of all ages, gender and skill levels on the trails. As a result, I was not the least bit surprised this past winter when I saw a couple in their 70's on the Granite Mountain trail, riding as leisurely on a single track as if they were pedaling through their neighborhood. The takeaway – anyone can mountain bike.


Now, it's one thing for a rider with many years of experience to make that statement, it's another thing for you to believe it and believe it enough to consider riding yourself. That's where Maverick comes in. Maverick is 1.4 miles long and snakes between the Watershed Trail and Brown's Ranch Road, which is the main trail out of the Brown's Ranch trailhead. With banked corners, roller coaster bumps, and short rises and descents, Maverick is a throwback trail that will delight any adrenaline junkie. That does not mean, however, that Maverick is an experts-

only trail. To the contrary, a beginner can navigate Maverick – and I can prove it.

I recently rode Maverick with my good friend, Peter Bartolini, and his son, Sam (age 9). While Peter and I have been riding together for years, Sam is a rank beginner who exercises a justifiable amount of caution when riding. When the trails seemed too steep or technical, Sam simply stopped, walked his bike through that section, and then continued riding. He deftly handled the turns, roller coaster bumps, and even some of the wash sections that can be tricky for bikers to navigate.

At the same time as Sam was testing his skills, Peter and I were able to take turns venturing ahead on the trail. We could accelerate through the banked turns, jump off the roller coaster bumps and otherwise indulge our inner adrenaline junkie. Maverick was able to accommodate all three of us at the same time.

In the end, my point remains that mountain biking is not a sport that is limited to any particular group of people. It is a sport in which, at least on some level, everyone can participate if they wish. If you want to learn more about the sport, find a friend who is an experienced rider, ask a local bike shop if they can recommend someone who gives lessons, or go to the MSC website to check the calendar of events for an MSC group ride for beginners. Always make sure that someone with experience verifies that you have the appropriate equipment for your ride.

I'm pretty sure that Sam had a great time on Maverick, and I know that you can too. I hope to see you on the trails. 





Elf Owl getting ready to dine on a scorpion. Photo by R. Babb

## Do You Like Us?

By McDowell Sonoran Conservancy staff

It should come as no surprise to anyone that social media is a powerful way to share stories and communicate messages. Conservationists are more and more routinely using social media in various forms as a way to communicate with supporters.

At the [McDowell Sonoran Conservancy](#), communications are shared through the two most popular social media platforms [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). Whether sharing stories, photographs, information about upcoming hikes or findings from the McDowell Sonoran Field Institute, these social sites engage followers to learn more about the [McDowell Sonoran Conservancy](#), and what's going on in Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve.

The defining difference between social media and traditional media can be found in its name - it's "social."

Rather than the one-way communications that are a hallmark of traditional media sources like television, newspapers and radio, social media is



interactive and participative. The true value of [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and other social media lies in its ability to deliver conservation messages to people with little knowledge of an issue and make it easy for them to become more aware, take action or lend their support.

This exciting shift toward interactive media communications allows anyone to become a content publisher. With the Conservancy overseeing more than 30,000 acres of Sonoran desert, the input from countless stewards and hikers enriches the understanding of the Preserve to an ever-expanding audience.


The use of social media in conservation efforts also attracts a large number of users who enjoy actively engaging with peers and the Conservancy about issues and topics that are close to their heart. This is particularly powerful when social media is used to stimulate public support for conservation action, inform about new trail openings like the new Jane Rau Trail, or share unique photographs and personal perspectives from the Preserve.

A recent post to the Conservancy Facebook page by a follower shows photographs of an Elf Owl eating a scorpion. More than 1,030 viewers saw the photos and shared them with countless others. Each time a viewer shares a [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) post with a friend it also encourages that reader to "Like" or "Follow" us, expanding our audience of supporters and advocates

for the Preserve. Just recently, followers of the Conservancy [Facebook](#) page topped 1,636 and will continue to grow as more and more individuals follow us and share us with their friends.

Along with [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) is a particularly powerful communication source for those who hike trails in the Preserve. Stewards and guests can post photos and short messages about all the beauty they are observing, but more importantly what they are feeling as they hike the majestic Sonoran desert. [Twitter](#) also provides a way to ask questions or post concerns about conservation and environmental issues of the Preserve.

So do you like us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#)? Do you share posts or post photographs? Every time you post to one of these sites you expand the Conservancy story, which helps to attract more friends to help us protect and share the Preserve now and for future generations.

Like us now on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#). You will be enriched by sharing the beauty and splendor of Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve when you do. 



# Four Tips for Creating a Positive Hiking Experience with Your Kids

By Barb Pringle  
McDowell Sonoran Conservancy master steward  
McDowell Sonoran Conservancy Field Institute  
citizen scientist



Hikes on the McDowell Sonoran Preserve's many family-friendly trails are a great way to enjoy time with your kids and get them out in nature. Doing so is critically important these days, as a study from the [Kaiser Family Foundation](#) illustrates. It found that today's American youth (between 8 and 18 years old) spend an average of 7 hours and 38 minutes each day using entertainment media. That works out to more than 53 hours per week! This is a substantial increase over prior years, driven largely by mobile devices like smartphones and tablets.

While these activities have their place and aren't inherently bad, make sure they don't block out time for physical activities that are good for both the body and the mind. Richard Louv is the author of the best-selling book, *Last Child in the Woods*, and has written extensively about the need to expose kids to nature. He writes, "Research suggests that exposure to the natural world – including nearby nature in cities – helps improve human health, well-being, and intellectual capacity in ways that science is only recently beginning to understand."

One positive way to limit your child's use of online entertainment is by planning regular hiking outings. Here are four tips for creating a positive and safe hiking experience with the family:

## Store the smartphone (emergencies excepted).

Unless there's an emergency medical situation requiring you to call 911, everyone puts their phone in their pocket or fanny pack and leaves the conversations, texts and tweets for later. This is the safest way for you and your kids to enjoy the trails without the danger of a fall or twisted ankle caused by inattention to trail conditions. Other hikers on the trail will probably appreciate the fact that you're not talking on your phone and spoiling their desire for a quiet hiking experience. If your kids want to take photos with their phone, that's great.

## Focus on the journey not the destination.

You can teach your kids to be great nature observers by role-modeling that behavior yourself. Look for birds or wildlife, bird nests, animal tracks, desert flowers, or unusual rock formations. Stop at viewpoints and soak in the scenery.

## Schedule hike time and distance appropriately.

If possible, start your hike in the morning when it's cooler and kids are fresher, more alert and enthusiastic. At the trailhead, ask a Conservancy Pathfinder for appropriate hike lengths and difficulty level for your family's ability.

## Carry healthy snacks and plenty of water.

Your kids will enjoy the hike more if they're properly hydrated and energized. Take a snack break at a scenic spot along the way and pass out healthy snacks such as nuts and fruits. Make sure they place trash from snacks back in their pack and carry it out. Teach your children this well-known outdoors expression: "Leave only footprints, take only photos."

Every child needs nature, and so do moms and dads. Clear time in your schedule and experience the beauty, wonder and health benefits of a hike in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. 🐦

Family Fun Hikes help teach kids about nature. Photo by: R. Raish.



# Faster Sponsors Tour de Scottsdale for Second Year

Thank you Faster, Cycling's Most Comprehensive Performance Center, in Scottsdale for their generous support of the [McDowell Sonoran Conservancy](#) by sponsoring the [2014 Tour de Scottsdale](#) at the Family Fun Level. Funding provided by Faster over the past two years has aided the Conservancy to support the conservation and protection of Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve, the largest urban preserve in America.

Faster's generous support through the Tour de Scottsdale makes a significant impact by assisting the Conservancy to increase volunteer stewardship of the Preserve, which now totals more than 30,000 acres, as well as supporting ongoing research in the Preserve conducted by the McDowell Sonoran Field Institute.

"The Preserve offers some of the best outdoor resources available and by being a part of its preservation through the Tour de Scottsdale we can help to enhance it for hikers, equestrians, cyclists, and runners," says James Kramer, Faster's founder.

"We are excited to be part of one of the preeminent cycling events in the valley with our second year sponsorship. We know the proceeds from the [2014 Tour de Scottsdale](#) go directly to maintaining this majestic natural resource, our Preserve."

Thank you Faster for your continued commitment to help protect, preserve and share our McDowell Sonoran Preserve for our community and for future generations through your support of the [McDowell Sonoran Conservancy](#). 🐦

# Check Out Our New Wikipedia Page!

By McDowell Sonoran Conservancy staff

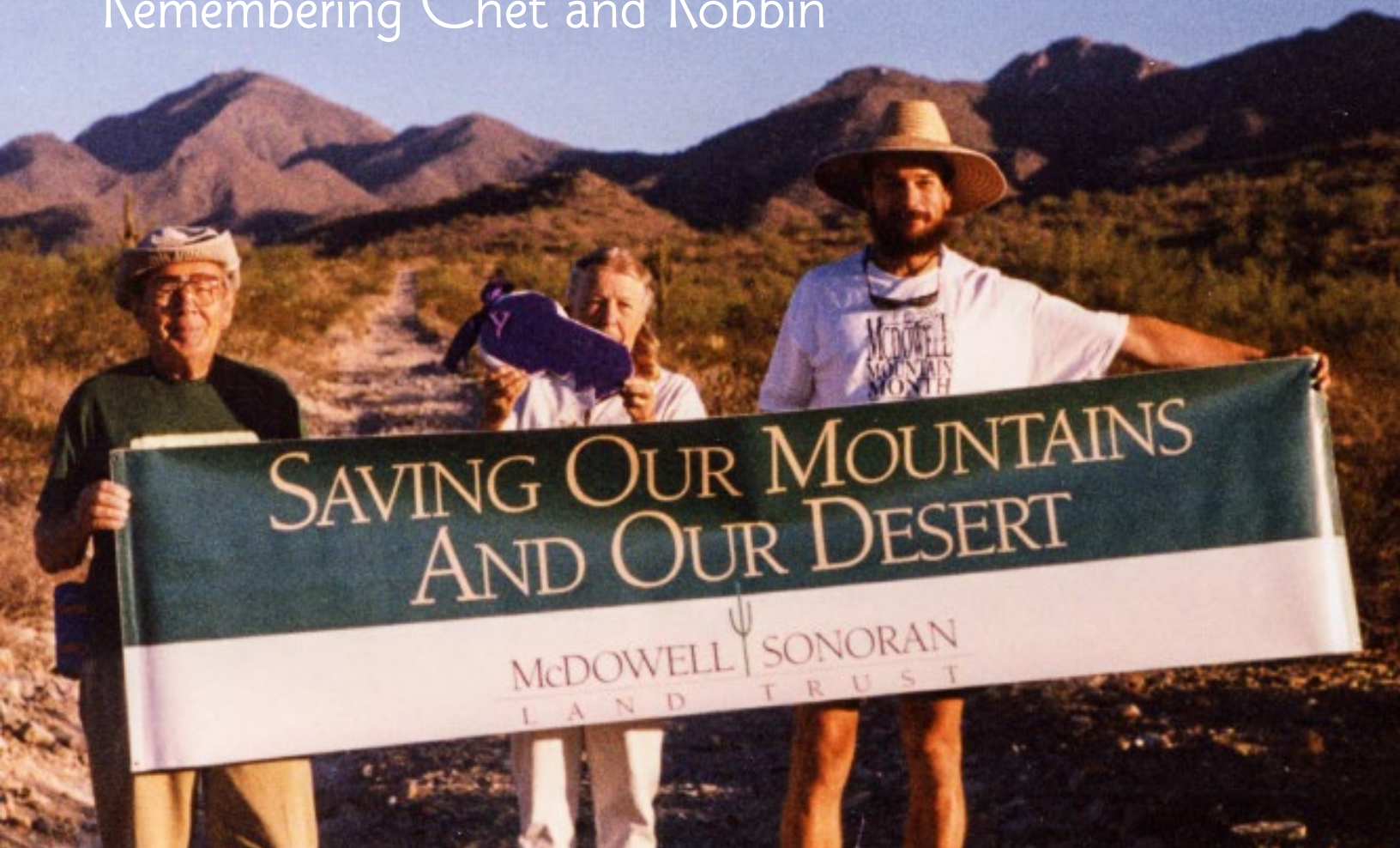


Wikipedia, founded in 2001, has become one of the largest online reference sites in the world, attracting 495 million unique visitors each month and over three billion mobile page visits. Wikipedia allows individuals to add pages to its extensive content, estimated to number over 32 million pages in more than 285 languages. Wikipedia co-founder Jimmy Wales said that Wikipedia is "an effort to create and distribute a multilingual free encyclopedia of the highest quality to every single person on the planet in his or her own language."

MSC wanted to tap into Wikipedia's powerful (and free) online position to help build awareness of the organization, its goals and programs, and partnership with the City of Scottsdale in protecting the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. A small taskforce of

MSC stewards and non-MSA volunteers met for several months to create [MSC's Wikipedia page](#). Future plans include adding more references information, Preserve maps, and photos showcasing the Preserve's beauty.

# Remembering Chet and Robbin



(L to R) Chet Andrews, Jane Rau and Greg Woodall led early preservation efforts.

Chet Andrews, MSC's beloved Steward #1, passed away on April 12, 2014. Chet left a lasting legacy of community service and was a wonderful role-model to many MSC stewards. Master steward Len Marcisz describes Chet as "the master builder. It was he who recruited stewards, taught or organized the teaching of the bulk of the subjects, mentored each steward on the trail, led many of the trail-building and mitigation activities, and encouraged each steward to pursue his or her individual fulfillment through volunteering." Next time you hike the Lost Dog Trail, stop at the Chet Andrews Amphitheater and say a quiet thanks to this kind and inspirational leader.

Robbin Schweitzer unexpectedly passed from this life on May 28, 2014. Robbin worked for the City of Scottsdale as a preserve coordinator, spending much of her time out in the Preserve helping to protect it and working alongside MSC stewards on a wide variety of projects. Stewards loved working with Robbin. She was described by her MSC friends as hard-working, caring, friendly, patient and possessed of a great sense of humor. Her untimely passing has deeply affected many stewards, who will never forget their friend Robbin.



Robbin Schweitzer was dedicated to protecting the Preserve.

## Help us keep our promise to the future . . .

The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy champions the sustainability of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve for the benefit of this and future generations. Our mission is a promise to our children, and theirs - to protect and promote Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve so that it will flourish for years to come. Help us keep our promise to the future by going to our website - [www.mcdowellsonoran.org](http://www.mcdowellsonoran.org) - and making a tax-deductible gift today. Thank you for your support!