

TRAIL DAY

NOVEMBER 12th Dreamy Draw Recreation Area

Volunteers needed for a trail maintenance project within the Dreamy Draw Recreation Area.

Enjoy a nice hike to the work site and participate in a worthwhile trail project.

Join Ken Gometz and other PMPC members at 7:00 A.M. at Dreamy Draw Recreation Area (Northern & 51 freeway).

The weather should be perfect!

EVENTS CALENDAR

November 5th: Rio Salado Habitat Reclamation Project dedication (see details on page one).

November 7th: PMPC Meeting Sheriffs Posse Building, 7:00 p.m.

December 4th: Holiday Meeting and dinner, 2:00 p.m., hosted by Susanne and Ian Rothwell. Please call 602-493-1302 to RSVP.

Third Saturday of the Month all winter: Coffee house & music events, North Mountain Visitor Center.

March 4, 2006: 30th Annual Spring Trek - South Mountain Visitors Center.

January 2, 2006: PMPC Meeting 7:00 P.M. at the Desert Biotonical Garden.

LOOKOUT

Phoenix Mountains Preservation Council, Inc.
P.O. Box 26121
Phoenix, Arizona 85068-6121

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The Phoenix Mountains Preservation Council is dedicated to protecting our Phoenix Mountains Preserves.

<http://www.phoenixmountains.org>



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North Mountain Visitor Center Opens

Over thirty organizations representing public lands management and protection, including members of the Phoenix Mountains Preservation Council, were part of the festivities for the dedication of the new North Mountain Visitor Center.

A table display by PMPC promoted the long preservation record of our group and members collected signatures on petitions for the "Conserving Arizonan's Future" ballot initiative. An interesting display of native birds and bats provided by the Arizona Game and Fish Department was a big hit with children, including his own visiting grandchildren, according to Steve Alonge, PMPC board member.

The release of two captive raised hawks by Councilwoman Bilsten and Mayor Gordon cumulated the morning event. According to the Parks Department web site, "The center offers educational classes and displays to interpret and understand the Sonoran Desert found right outside the center's doors. A series of trails adjacent to the center mean desert exploration is just a step away. The center is also a good stop for those planning a longer, more challenging hike in this part of the preserve". Additionally, throughout this winter and spring the new visitor center will host the Coffee House Music Series. The next "coffee house music" event will be November 19, 2005.

Another dedication, this one for the **Rio Salado Habitat Restoration Project**, is slated for Saturday, November 5th between 8:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. This event will feature birding and nature hikes on new trails that will allow visitors to see the first phase of the City of Phoenix river bed reclamation. Thousands of trees including hundreds of cottonwoods plus other native plants are part of the restoration of 600 hundred acres along the Salt River that has, for too long, been the site of trash dumping, mineral withdrawal, and industrial development. The Central Avenue bridge will be closed to vehicles that morning, so the Parks Department suggests using the parking lots and shuttle bus system located nearby.

See: <http://www.phoenix.gov/riosalado> for event and parking details.

PMPC Spring Trek Volunteers Needed

The annual spring event for PMPC, Spring Trek, is in search of volunteers willing to help now, in the critical planning stages, and on the day of the event.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the event and offers the chance to help make this the biggest 'trek' ever.

Contact Valerie Denny at:
602-265-5324 to volunteer.

Updates on South Mountain Freeway & Work of Bond Committee Outlined

By Mike Goodman

The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) may be getting closer to issuing a draft report on the selection of the route for the South Mountain Freeway.

It appears ADOT is getting pressure to make a choice. At some of the recent public meetings ADOT officials have been telling the public that the east end portion of the freeway - that portion that goes through South Mountain and follows Pecos Road - is at this time only a 'place holder' until the Gila Indians make a decision regarding the freeway on their Reservation. And that the public will have time at later meetings to comment on this portion.

However, if the Gila Indians have not made a choice by the time ADOT issues the final report then it is possible that the Pecos Road / South Mountain alignment will become the alignment by default if a freeway is to be built.

It may be that if people do not speak up now to oppose that alignment, ADOT could be able to say no opposition exists.

Another slate of public meetings will occur in mid November. It is important for you to attend and make your position known. See the times listed here.

In a related matter, the City of Phoenix Parks Board voted unanimously to oppose the freeway through the South Mountain Preserve and for the city, state, and Gila River Indian Community to work to find an alternative solution.

The citizens Park Bond Committee finished its work on recommending how to divide the \$75 million for park bond funds it was allotted in the upcoming March bond election. The committee and staff worked very hard in a short amount of time. Everyone did as good a job as they were allowed.

Of interest for the Preserve is a proposed \$5.5million to help purchase the state land on the south side of South Mountain. Also \$1.5 million for trail work. Other items were on the list but did not make the final cut.

Plan on Attending Upcoming ADOT South Mountain Freeway Open House Meetings

Meetings will be held from noon to 8 p.m. each day.

November 16: Corona Ranch, 29th Avenue & Baseline.

November 17: Grace Inn, I-10 & Elliot, Ahwatukee.

PMPC supports the effort to reform State Trust Lands and encourage you to review the proposal and sign the petition in favor of the ballot initiative "Conserving Arizona's Future"

To see maps and learn more details about the ballot initiative:

"CONSERVING ARIZONA'S FUTURE"

visit the Sonoran Institute at

<http://www.sonoran.org>

See - State Trust Land Program /What's New/'Initiative'



Current Issues of Concern

Lincoln Drive and 40th Street housing development overturns deed restrictions that provided for a portion of the land to become Mountains Preserve and also threatens a reduction in public access. Part of this property has been slated for purchase for decades. It was to be added to the Mountain Preserve but now that opportunity appears to be ending as a new owner prepares for large lot gated community. Since this owner is down zoning to less density no public hearing will be held.

Bond recommendations have been passed from the citizen committees to City Council. Funds for trail work are part of the bond package, (see article).

Edge Guidelines. Updated guidelines covering new Phoenix Sonoran Preserves being considered.

City of Phoenix abandonment of unused street easements that border preserves.

What's happening in your neighborhood? Contact PMPC via e-mail at: **info@phoenixmountains.org**



Favorite Hike

NEW NAME BUT STILL A GOOD LOOP

By Ken Gometz

Freedom Trail has a nice ring but it is not as descriptive as Circumference Trail. However, the political powers have decided that for now it shall be the Freedom Trail, but by whatever name, trail 302 remains Betsy and my favorite and a most enjoyable Mountains Preserve hike

Because of neighborhood access on the west side we can hike the trail without doing a portion of the Piestewa Peak summit trail. Even avoiding the climb over a portion of the summit trail, another hike for another time, the elevation change is still approximately 500 feet plus numerous up and down changes along the way. We go at a leisurely pace and it is worth stopping at least once to catch your breath and enjoy the views. The desert in this area is a treat considering we are in the center of a large city.

Starting in the east, a morning walk the sun at your back, it is a nice trail starting on the east slope of Piestewa Peak. The trail joins the Nature Trail and the beauty of the Sonoran desert is evident. Looking north there is little indication of a city, only plants and if lucky animals. We have seen many rabbits, coyotes, a fox and quail plus many other birds we need help identifying.

Eventually the trail turns west from the Nature Trail and joins the Pearl Charles Trail 1A. Where these trails intersect there is the memorial plaque dedicated to PMPC mentor Dottie Gilbert. Then it is uphill to the highest elevation. On top are benches and flat rocks which afford a resting spot with good views of the northern preserve plus a few houses and a freeway as a reminder of where you are really hiking.

Next it is mostly down hill through a canyon with little evidence of the city. This is our favorite part of the trail because of the isolation from civilization and the beauty of the terrain. There are large rock cliffs on one side and Piestewa Peak on the other side. After about one mile from the highest point the Pearl Charles Trail goes to the right descending to a nice valley and another way to the neighborhood. The Freedom Trail turns left at the junction and follows the west side of Piestewa Peak for about half a mile until the junction with the neighborhood access. There are good views of Estrella Mountain, South Mountain and the White Tank Mountain if you look beyond the houses. Thanks to a generous neighbor, who allows access through his property, we are back on the street and close to home.

This three mile hike takes us about two hours. It is scenic and enough exercise on a weekend morning to justify a big breakfast!