

# MOUNTAIN PRESERVES' MULTI-USE TRAILS AND TUNNELS

By Carol Ann Muller

In 1981 I moved into a horse-property area between 7th Street and 12th St./Roberts Road to Hearn. Only Hearn was paved then. East of 12th Street to Cave Creek Rd. there were only a few homes and much open desert with Lookout Mt. to the north and North Mountain to the south. There already was a county tunnel under Thunderbird Rd. linking my neighborhood to North Mountain Preserve and other tunnels under Cave Creek Rd and Dreamy Draw (S51) so that I could ride from my home to Piestewa Peak on multi-use trails. Another tunnel connected North Mountain to the Shaw Butte area. It was a horse lover's paradise!

In the mid 1980's Gosnell Builders put in the golf course. On behalf of the horse property owners, I requested that trails be installed leading from my neighborhood to connect with Lookout Mountain (north) and all of the preserves to the south by putting in trails around the golf course and through a couple of drainages. With few exceptions this was done and now users can follow trails from Lookout Mountain to the south and west and vice versa.

One of my favorite trails is the one that goes under 7th St. at the North Mountain Visitor Center and meanders through a beautiful valley toward Peoria and & 7th Ave. Once in the valley, you are flanked by mountains and it is as if you are in a

wilderness area all by yourself. It can give you a real feeling of peace.

## CALANDER

**November 5, 2007**

PMPC Board Meeting, 7:00 pm. North Mountain Visitors Center, 7th Street south of Thunderbird Avenue.

**Novemeber 8, 2007**

City of Phoenix will bid on another portion (944 acres) of the Sonoran Preserve. This parcel is east of I-17 and south of Carefree Highway.

**December 2, 2007-** Sunday, 2:30 p.m. Potluck meeting at Susanne Rothwell's home. RSVP details on [www.phoenixmountains.org](http://www.phoenixmountains.org).

### LOOKOUT

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

#### Executive Board:

Tice Supplee, *President*  
Ken Gometz, *Vice President*  
Robin Salthouse, *Treasurer*  
Shelley MacDonald, *Recording Secretary*  
Susanne Rothwell, *Corresponding Secretary*

The *LOOKOUT* is published by the Phoenix Mountains Preservation Council; Craig Weaver, Editor.

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

<http://www.phoenixmountains.org>



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

TO:



# LOOKOUT

Phoenix Mountains Preservation Council, Inc.

P.O. Box 26121, Phoenix, AZ 85068-6121

[www.phoenixmountains.org](http://www.phoenixmountains.org)

## Festival Shows Options to Homeowners for Helping to Protect Preserves

It is easy to see an increasing number of negative impacts on the Preserves and on South Mountain Park.

But if you look further their are also an increasing number of people involved with protecting the Preserves. The recent City of Phoenix Outdoor Receration Festival had over 50 groups - many working to rehabilate the Preserves.

The best example is the WeedWackers.

This group of volunteers are battling non-native plants that now reside in the Preserves and threaten the native Sonoran desert plants.



Dangerous grasses and native solutions were displayed by PMPC and Desert Botanical Garden at the recent South Mountain event. Leslie Spencer-Snyder, Tice Supplee, Wendy Hodgson, and Shelley MacDonald staffed the booths.

Neighborhoods and homeowners that live near these jewels have valuable eyes and ears in the long-term protection of these areas. Whether it is walking, hiking, horseback riding, or mountain biking the Preserves offer a range of recreation activities but they need help from all of

us. Groups of volunteers are working hard to reduce the threat of invasive plants. Now nearby homeowners and neighborhood associations can help by eliminating fountain grass and buffelgrass grass from their yards. (See more details inside this newsletter.)



## HOMEOWNERS NEED TO WACK WEEDS

Neighborhood associations and home owners that live near the Preserves are needed to help fight buffelgrass and fountain grass.

With bunches sometimes growing in neighborhood alleys and washes these fire hazards can threaten homes, the Mountain Preserves, and South Mountain Park.

Buffelgrass, and its larger relative fountain grass, are non-native plants that threaten all the natural plants of the Sonoran Desert in two ways. First, they out compete natives for water and space. Second, they represent a serious fire threat that can destroy the desert plants. Since the Sonoran desert is not prepared for a grass fire caused by buffelgrass the changes could last forever.

Another part of this problem is that these grasses are so well adapted to Arizona that they also appear in yards and alleys all over the metro region. Many were not planted by home owners but instead are volunteers that have popped up without much notice.

The smaller buffelgrass lines alleys and neighborhood streets while the more visible fountain grass becomes 'adopted' in yards.

But the threat these two plants bring with them is significant and that is why home owners need to join the eradication efforts.

With almost no water both of these plants will grow almost anywhere -



### Buffelgrass

*Pennisetum ciliare* (12 to 18 inches tall)

and grow so well that they displace native plants. But far worse is the threat of fire. Clusters of buffelgrass spread fire rapidly across desert land.

In neighborhoods the threat is on grass burning rapidly and igniting debris, fences, and homes.

By eliminating buffelgrass and fountain grass from your yard and from neighborhoods that border the Park and Preserves both homes plus native plants can be protected.

The WeedWackers have extensive experience in removing these clumps of grass. They have found that digging below the surface is needed to get the clump of grass and its roots.

By carefully placing the clump into a leaf bag you can avoid spreading seeds. Generally, a pick or shovel helps to get below the surface and will help remove more of the tightly clumped grasses.

However, these are tough plants so be ready to nip that site again a couple



### Fountain Grass

*Pennisetum setaceum* (18 to 36 inches tall)

weeks after a big rain. And, don't think that a string trimmer will work since the roots of these grasses will just launch new sprouts.

By going below the surface with a pick or shovel you will remove the clump base and its roots. You can protect your home, the neighborhood, and help the Preserves by creating a buffer of zero fountain grass and buffelgrass.

By fighting buffelgrass (and its ornamental relative, fountain grass) in the neighborhood you'll be protecting your home and the Preserves.

*For More Information Visit:*  
<http://www.phoenixweedwackers.com/>  
[http://www.pazten.wr.usgs.gov/buffelgrass/buffelgrass\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.pazten.wr.usgs.gov/buffelgrass/buffelgrass_brochure.pdf)  
<http://www.pima.gov/cmo/sdcp/species/fsheets/ex/fg.html>  
<http://www.pima.gov/cmo/sdcp/species/fsheets/ex/bgrass.html>  
[www.aznps.org](http://www.aznps.org)  
[www.dbg.org](http://www.dbg.org)

## Desert Grasses Offer Landscape Options

If you are worried about removing the fountain grass from your yard rest assured many native grasses exist that offer a variety of landscape options.

Wendy Hogdson, from the Desert Botanical Garden, displayed native grasses at the South Mountain Outdoor Recreational Festival. Worth considering for your yard are:

Bull Grass (*Muhlenbergia emersleyi*)  
Deer Grass (*Muhlenbergia rigens*)  
Blue Grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*)  
Arizona Cottontop (*Bothriochloa barbinodis*)

These grasses were a few of the many types native to the southwest. When Wendy landscaped her yard she added bunches of grasses to the set of other desert plants.

These clusters of grasses are colorful, low water usage, and low maintenance. Better is the way the patches of grasses provide the soft foundation seen in the Sonoran desert but not often seen in an urban yard.

In the conversion of her yard, the desert grasses add to the other elements for a more complete desert landscape.

She said, finding a broader selection of grasses is getting easier but you might want to call your local nursery to see which native and southwestern types they carry.

## District 3 & 7 Candidates

Each candidate is concerned about the Preserves. However, only **Jon Altmann** (District 3) and Mike Nowakowski (District 7) answered the three questions PMPC sent to all the candidates.

The questions dealt with issues that are specific to the Mountain Preserves and to South Mountain. Most important was J. Altmann and M. Nowakowski commitment to protecting South Mountain from Arizona Department of Transportation desire to build a freeway.

The details offered in written answers showed a serious attitude to issues that directly impact the Preserves. PMPC members thank the candidates that took the time to answer our questions.

These notes consolidate comments the candidates wrote or offered at one of forums.

**Jon Altmann** said the Preserves are a "treasure" and after the forum he discussed the problem of the freeway damaging South Mountain. He said, he would try to use his experience living in Northern Arizona to work with the Gila River Indian Community on a mutually beneficial route for the freeway that avoids South Mountain. (Responded to PMPC questions.)

**Maria Baier** said she lives near a Preserve, has working experiences (example Arizona Preserve Initiative) that relates directly to Preserves and she supports long-term funding. (No response to PMPC questions.)

**Mike Nowakowski** said he would follow the existing Village Plan open space overlays. Would not allow special interests to gain amendments. Also he said, it is important to retain rural character of Laveen as a representation of the agricultural heritage of Phoenix and South Mountain needs to be protected from encroachments, including the freeway. He is endorsed by the Sierra Club. (Responded to PMPC questions.)

**Laura Pastor:** She supports the protection of the mountain preserves and believes that the Village Plans should be followed. She believes proposition 207 should be modified to allow for historic preservation, parks and open space. (No response to PMPC questions.)