

New Public Aid May Help Reopen Visitor Centers

By Susanne Rothwell

To help operate and maintain the North Mountain Visitors Center the City of Phoenix Parks & Recreation Department has a current Request for Proposal (RFP).

The visitor center is a gateway for nearby tourists and an information site that has provided educational services to the Phoenix community.

Due to budget cuts, the city is looking for non-profit organizations to operate the Visitor Center. PMPC along with Save Our Mountains Foundation, in collaboration with several other organizations are considering a response to the RFP.

The aim is putting together an association with the altruistic aspiration of keeping the facility open and providing important services to tourists and local citizens. This would be a wonderful opportunity for PMPC and other team members to keep open a valuable asset within the Mountain Preserves. The 10,000 square foot building is located on 7th Street, south of Thunderbird Avenue.



Visitor Center currently closed.

Meeting - Date & Location CHANGED

Due to September holiday PMPC Board Meeting will be held:

Monday, 7:00 p.m.
September 13, 2010

Nina Mason Pulliam
Rio Salado Audubon Center
3131 South Central Avenue

LOOKOUT

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

Executive Board:

Susanne Rothwell, *President*
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Craig Weaver, *Editor*

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

www.phoenixmountains.org



Our thanks go to the Rangers for restoring the Perl Charles Trail site with a new layer of plexiglass so again the bronze plaque can be read by visitors on Trail 1A!



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TO:

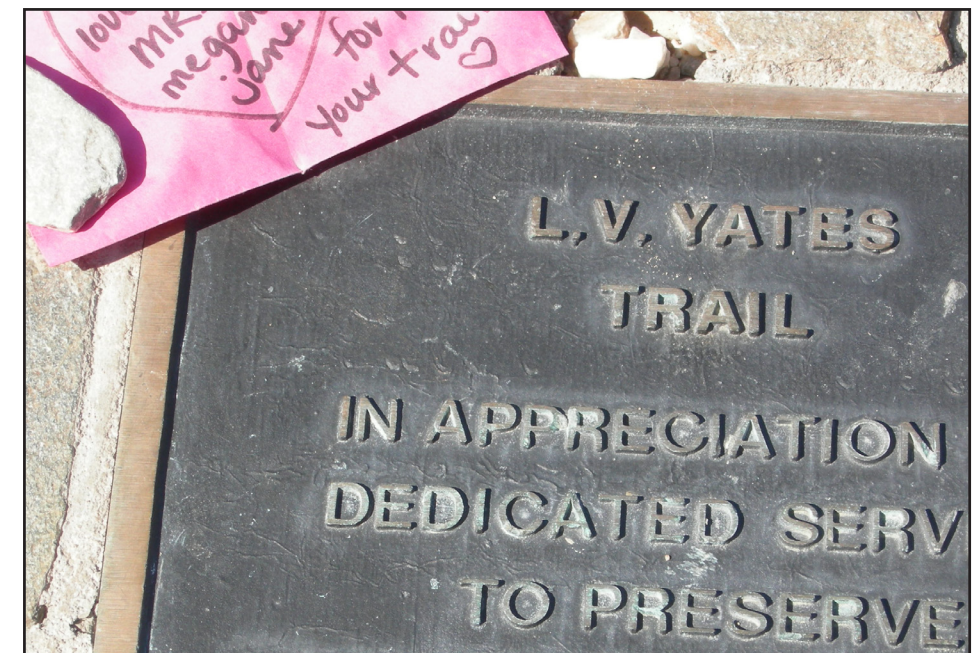


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Photograph by Dick Fincher

LOVE YOUR TRAIL - THANK YOU!

CHILDREN TEACH OTHERS ABOUT VALUE OF PRESERVES

See the top corner of this photograph? The thank-you note shows how much children loved a memorable day of hiking. They experienced the natural values by immersion; the same way L.V. Yates introduced so many others to Arizona's great scenery and environments. While the challenges of maintaining the Preserves continue; a note from children reminds us that the work others have done, and the work others still do, provides Phoenix with a great part of living in Arizona - now and forever!

Major Changes to Development Project Bordering Shaw Butte Part of Preserve

By Susanne Rothwell & Ken Gometz

Owner of Visiquet Properties, Joel Broder, is asking the City of Phoenix for several variances on a new development plan for an assisted living and memory care facility. The property is located at Cactus Road and 19th Avenue, on what used to be known as the Bell property.

Mr. Broder sold 30 acres of the 39 acre property to the City of Phoenix and kept nine acres for development.

About seven acres of this land is being used for the planned commercial facility that is under review by the City. The original development proposal was able to obtain variances for additional height to build three stories, additional density, and to allow ten foot high retaining walls, (where six is the code). PMPC did not object to these variances since our objective was to ensure that the 30 acres was brought into the Phoenix Mountains Preserve.

Now Mr. Broder has changed the use of the facility from the original residential concept to a commercial facility, requiring a fifty foot building setback from the property line. This property line was determined by Mr. Broder and the development concept has now changed significantly.

Further, some of the land upon which Mr. Broder intends to build comes under the auspices of the Hillside Ordinance. This ordinance was put in place to protect hillside land above the 10% slope, often located adjacent to the existing Mountain Preserves. Mr. Broder wants to blade the site to a flat pad for commercial buildings and is asking for a variance from the ordinance which restricts hillside construction including earthwork to 35% of the area.

The Hillside Ordinance is in place to protect our mountain locations and PMPC is adamantly opposed to any transgression of this ordinance.

Although this project has only a few areas that are designed with building jutting into the fifty foot setback, the setback provides an important buffer between the large three and two story commercial buildings and the publicly owned Preserves.

If the setback and Hillside Ordinance are maintained then such harsh cuts that require a ten foot retaining wall might be averted and the project will be more sympathetic to its fragile mountain desert location.

It is for these reasons that PMPC is taking a stand to oppose the variances now under consideration by the City.

See 2008 PMPC Letter covering Hillside Ordinance on this site from at http://www.phoenixmountains.org/2008_Fall.pdf. *Lookout* page 2.

Several PMPC Board Members, in multiple emails with Mr. Broder, have provided the organizations concerns. In the recent email he said he will continue to pursue a variance to the Hillside Ordinance.

"I am an avid hiker and trail runner and am the direct beneficiary of [PMPC's] hard work and dedication almost every weekend. After having some dialogue with [PMPC] over the last few days, albeit mostly via email, I think I understand their position more clearly.

They have had a zero tolerance position on grading slopes in contravention [violation] of the Hillside Ordinance".

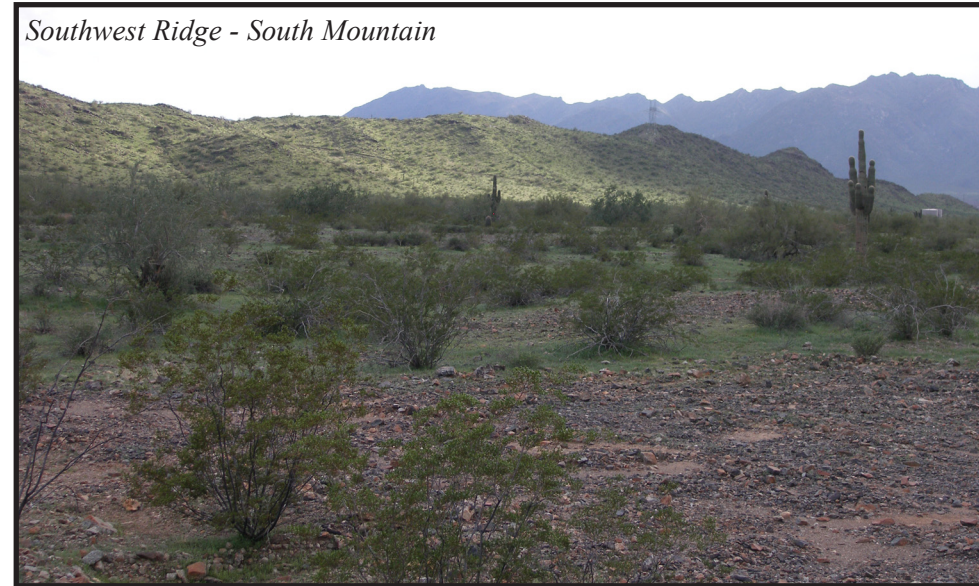
"They [PMPC] have held this position....and I respect them for it." But... "based on the PHO [Phoenix Hearing Officer, 8-18-2010] ruling today, this project is still subject to the Hillside Ordinance and will require a grading waiver to accomplish my objectives."

"I have filed for this waiver and await the scheduling of the next public hearing."

Joel Broder
Visiquet Properties



Do you know that North Mountain Preserve has a geologic combination of small hills made of very old 'slates' and larger hills made of dark volcanic basalt. Both in a Preserve where new is 20 million years old!



Wildlife connections follow ridge line west to Estrallia Mountains. But current county approved, ADOT alignment for Loop 202, will damage thousands of acres of South Mountain Park & Preserve. Enjoyment of the scenic San Juan Drive will end, (from where this photograph was taken) if freeway is built inside South Mountain Park & Preserve.

Phoenix Sonoran Preserve API Funding in Jeopardy

The Arizona Land Conservation Fund Transfer, also known as Proposition 301, will appear on the November 2, 2010 ballot in the state of Arizona as a legislatively-referred state statute. The measure would transfer \$123.5 million from a land-conservation fund to the general fund.

The legislative measure was signed by Governor Brewer, thus placing the measure on the November ballot. Arizona is one of ten states that allows a referred amendment to go on the ballot after a majority vote by state's legislature.

Every day, the long-term commitment that produced the Phoenix Mountains Preserve provide benefits to our community. To address explosive growth and expansion north, citizens again recognized the need for protected lands and approved the state-wide land conservation program (API).

Phoenix Sonoran Preserve is just one part of many community efforts that will end. "Scottsdale already has plans...for the McDowell Sonoran Preserve", according to Sandy Bahr. "There are some state trust lands that are not the mountains themselves, but provide some important connections, including to the Tonto National Forest - very spectacular Sonoran Desert lands", she said.

Two New Study Routes for South Mountain Freeway

Officials who back the idea of moving the planned route of Loop 202 between Chandler and Laveen to Gila River Indian Community land applauded news this week that a team of experts found two potential freeway routes on the reservation.

"It's very good to see that ADOT's efforts to work with the Gila River Indian Community is bearing fruit," U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell, said.

Last December, Mitchell met with state and tribal leaders, the Arizona Department of Transportation and tribe officials to take a look at the possibility of building the so-called 202 'South Mountain' Freeway on flat, empty land south of Ahwatukee Foothills.

(From Arizona Republic: <http://www.azcentral.com/news/articles/2010/07/30/20100730south-mountain-freeway-new-proposals.html>)

Progress continues toward alternative route that will continue protection of South Mountain as outlined by Congressman Harry Mitchell's staff at the PMPC May Meeting!