



MCDOWELL *Messenger*

MARICOPA COUNTY, ARIZONA ♦ NOVEMBER 2006

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE MCDOWELL PARK ASSOCIATION & FRIENDS OF THE MCDOWELL AREA



McDowell Park's new next-door neighbor

State Trust Land annexed by Fountain Hills; what park impact will new neighbors bring?

On June 5, 2006, the 1312 acres of State Trust Land at Fountain Hills northeast border officially became part of the town. It was the realization of a goal that had its early roots in 1991. It lay dormant for several years

until revived by a town-appointed ad hoc committee in 2003. It then went into high gear in the Fall of 2004, when town officials and the State Land Department began lengthy and sensitive negotiations which ultimately resulted in an agreement for the annexation by Fountain Hills of the two section parcel.

Annexation is not ownership. Through a complex process the town borders were extended to include what was formerly a county island, but was always

considered a logical addition to the town's land mass. At some point, possibly as early as January 2007, the parcel will be sold at auction by the Land Department and developed presumably by the new owner. Timing was the critical issue because annexation before a sale assured that development will be according to Fountain Hills' General Plan, codes, and ordinances, not the regulations of Maricopa County. This guaranteed that the new addition would mirror the rest of the community. ☞

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING — NOV. 15, 2006 — 7:00 p.m.

Rio Verde Community Center

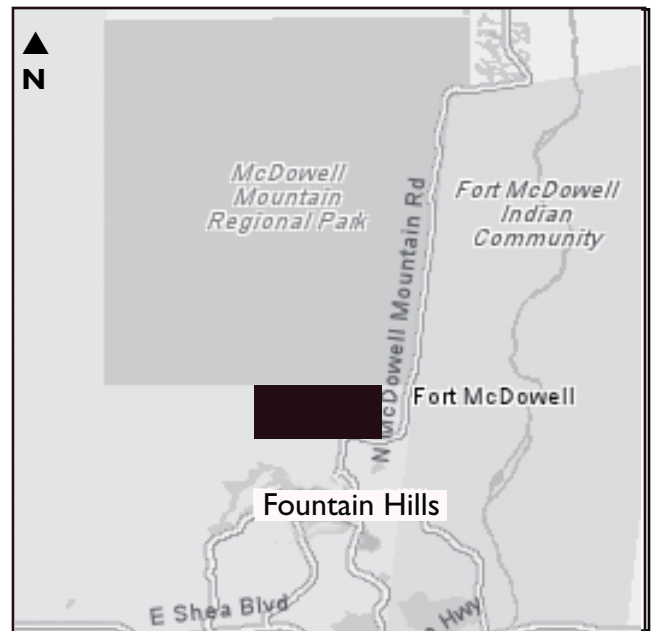
2 | Moreover, given that residential development does not pay for itself, annexation provides the town the right to impose development fees to offset the cost of infrastructure and other capital by-products of growth. This is in addition to tax and permit revenue driven by construction.

The agreement provides for a maximum of 1750 homes in varying densities, but topography and sanitary capacity will likely result in a lower number. Other benefits to the town include approximately seven hundred acres of gross open space, over 50% of the site, a forty-two acre park, a lodging overlay on the north border for a possible resort, perimeter buffers, and linear connections to McDowell Mountain Park.

Not everyone was satisfied with all features of the agreement, but support for annexation per se was literally universal. In fact, it was a top choice for immediate action by citizens in the recently completed Fountain Hills Strategic Plan.

While the annexed area is dwarfed by the adjacent 21,000 acre county park, the introduction of 3,000-4,000 new residents next door will have its impact on the park and its administration. There will surely be an increase in McDowell Mountain visitors as immediate neighbors as well as all residents, see it as their back yard. Tourists will see the virgin desert in a closer connection to the community. This suggests the potential for more park revenue available for site specific application.

These funds can be utilized to develop and monitor new points of access and trails along the common border as well as other capital projects associated with increased use and security needs. Supplemental staffing may be in order to control such activities as ATV and motorcycle use in the park as well as



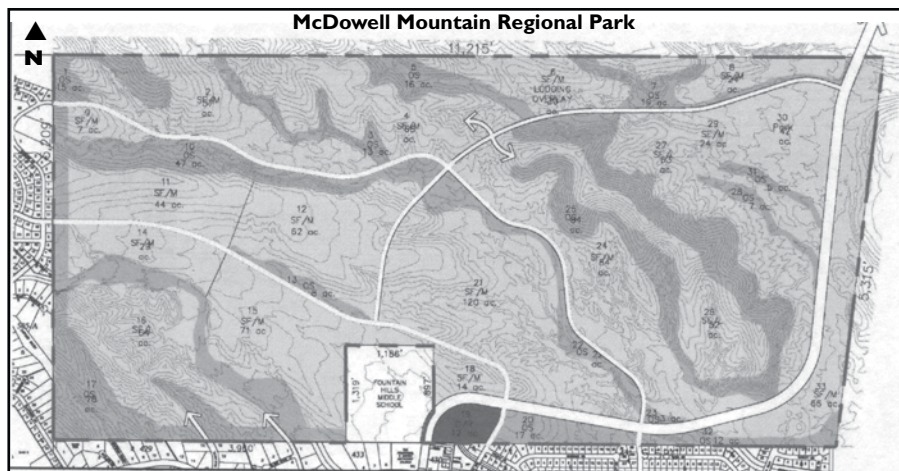
The black box represents the State Land Trust as it relates to Fountain Hills and the McDowell Park.

firearm discharge, formerly a fact of life on the state owned land but not permitted within the town by ordinance.

In addition, cooperative efforts will be required to identify and preserve traditional wildlife corridors joining McDowell Mountain Park and the newly annexed land as well as to mitigate the impact of construction traffic on both entities during development. We will all have to live with the temporary inconvenience as building progresses on the parcel.

McDowell Mountain Park is a gem. Fountain Hills citizens are environmentally conscious. The forecast here is a close working relationship between the two new neighbors for their mutual benefit.

Ed Kehe is a MPA Director and Fountain Hills Councilman.



To the left is the land use plan for the annexed state land. The darker areas are open space but because this isn't in color it doesn't show various open space zoning. A park is proposed for the upper right corner. The white block in the lower middle is the F. H. Middle School. Approximately 700 acres of the total 1312 acres are open space. Once the land is sold, we will need to watch any proposed plans from the developer and council action—at least as it might pertain to the McDowell Park border. More details can be obtained from the Town offices.

MPA Annual Meeting — November 15

7 p.m. — Rio Verde Community Center

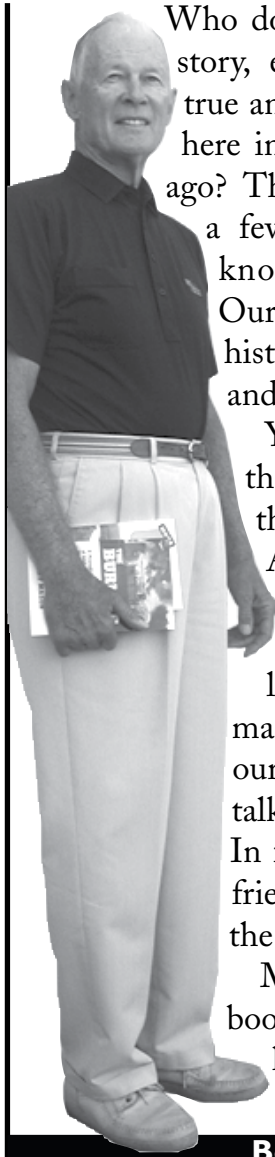
Besides our speaker, there will be a board election at the meeting. Candidates for re-election are Merideth Hale (Rio Verde), Bob Bohannon (Rio Verde), and Dick Oliver (Rio Verde). New candidates are Keith P. Clayton (Tonto Verde) and Mike O'Connor (Fountain Hills).

Leaving the board after three terms (and thus ineli-

gible for re-election) is Ed Kehe of Fountain Hills. Ed has served us well during his six years as a board member, most recently as head of the Nominating Committee. He was assisted in this task by board member and MPA Vice-President, John McNeill.

Author Bob Mason to speak at Annual Meeting

Who can resist a good cowboy story?



Who doesn't like a good cowboy story, especially when they are true and the cowboys lived right here in our neighborhood years ago? Then there are more than a few stories about the well-known Pemberton Ranch. Our Verde Valley has a rich history of interesting places and characters!

You'll hear about many of them and a lot more from the main speaker at MPA's Annual Membership Meeting, November 15, 2006. Bob Mason, noted local author, will talk about many fascinating aspects of our most recent past. It's a talk you won't want to miss. In fact, bring a non-member friend and sign him up after the meeting.

Mason has written five books, three of them on local history: "Verde Valley Lore," "More Verde Val-

ley Lore" and "The Burning." He also writes history-related columns for the *Fountain Hills Times*, *Let's Go* and *The Peak* magazine. His books are available at Gridleys in Fountain Hills and at the River of Time Museum.

Bob Mason is a long-time Rio Verde resident, moving there in 1983 after spending a business career with Cargill, Inc., in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He is in demand as a speaker and has spoken to many civic and historical organizations talking about the interesting past of our Verde Valley. He is a charter member of the Lower Verde Valley Museum Hall of Fame. Other interests include archaeology, hiking, golf, bridge and genealogy.



Bob Mason and his books



President's

MESSAGE

Jim Urban

Elections and our future

Most of us are counting the days until the November elections are over and the constant barrage of political ads—on television, in the newspapers, on radio, and by phone—cease. However, we do need to learn about the candidates and the issues. In addition to choosing officials at country, state, and national levels, this election is important because of the many statewide propositions to be voted.

Our September General Meeting in Fountain Hills featured presentations on several of these initiatives. Carla, Executive Director of the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy, discussed Proposition 106, the "Conserving Arizona's Future" initiative, which will protect almost 700,000 acres of State Trust Land from development. Her presentation in favor of this initiative was well received. She also discussed Proposition 105, a much less desirable late entry referred to the ballot by The Arizona Legislature, seemingly to confuse the voters and perhaps lead them to vote against both measures. The final message from the presentation is to vote for Prop. 106 and against Prop. 105.

Also speaking was Tina Beattie, representing the group in opposition to Proposition 207, which is deceptively named "Private Property Rights Protection Act." It claims to address eminent domain issues but extends beyond that problem and, as written, will force government entities to either pay for alleged land value losses or waive zoning laws for landowners requesting zoning changes. It is on the ballot in some form in seven states, funded primarily by a New York land investor. A similar measure passed in Oregon in 2004 has cost community governments (ie. their taxpayers) severely and has markedly impaired Oregon's land use laws.

Your MPA Board agrees with the Arizona groups in opposition to this proposal and has signed on with the lengthy list of organizations opposed to Prop. 207. Please keep these ideas in mind when you mark your ballot!

Golden Eagle trailhead open for your pleasure

By ROY KINSEY

Fountain Hills is an important neighbor of McDowell Mountain County Park. Since annexation of the adjoining two sections of state land, the town shares all the southern border of the Park. Further, last year the town opened the Golden Eagle Trailhead to provide entry into the Dixie Mine Trail.

Golden Eagle Blvd. starts from Palisades Blvd. (at the corner by the High School). The trailhead is located at the North end of Golden Eagle Blvd. A parking lot is located on the left side of Golden Eagle just before the gatehouse for Eagles Nest development. The trailhead includes bathroom facilities and a water tap. You will need plenty of water to enjoy the Dixie Mine hike. To reach that trail follow the information map and instructions that take you through 0.5 miles of sidewalk winding to the McDowell Park border. Once at the gate be prepared to insert one dollar for each person into the "iron ranger." Have a wonderful time wandering in typical Sonoran desert landscape with undulating ridges and washes. The mine is located about 2.5 miles from your entrance into the park. Return on the same route.

Longer range planning includes the opening of the Fountain Hills Preserve with access into the park at the southwest corner of the park.

The McDowell Park Association

OFFICERS:

President: Jim Urban, 471-3818

Vice-President: John McNeill, 837-1306

Secretary & Membership Chairman:

Merideth Hale, 471-1003

Treasurer: Ralph Donnelly, 471-0471

Board of Directors:

Bob Bohannon, 471-2222; Ed Kehe, 816-1538;
Dick Oliver, 471-7070; Margaret Scott, 473-3777.

McDowell Messenger: Mike O'Connor, Editor

FOR MESSENGER RELATED ITEMS, SEND TO:

P.O. Box 18117, Fountain Hills, Arizona 85269

E-mail: editor.messenger@yahoo.com; 480-837-7074

Water!

Old Pemberton well ready for wildlife

By RAND HUBBELL, *Supervisor*
MCDOWELL MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK

In 1917 a well was drilled to provide water for the Pemberton Ranch. The well appeared dry until the cowhands returned the next year and found water seeping from the wellhead. Eventually a windmill was constructed and for many years the well provided good quality water for the homestead and the cattle operation on the Pemberton and then the P-Bar ranch.

Some time after the land was purchased and became McDowell Mountain Regional Park, the windmill, which had stopped operating, was cut down and laid down near the old ranch site where it remains today. As long as anyone can remember, the 400' deep well has continued to seep water. Until just recently, the water eased up over the top of the pipe, onto the concrete base of the old windmill and into the desert.

Almost a year ago, several volunteers from the McDowell Park Association and Park Supervisor Rand Hubbell spent several hours cutting back the vegetation to provide some access to the well and windmill base. Following the many steps necessary to get a Cultural Resource Survey completed and then the results reviewed and approved by both the State Historical Preservation Office and the Arizona State Museum, the park was able to proceed with a much anticipated project.

On September 16th, a group of ten Boy Scouts, their friends and family all worked from morning to late afternoon to install a water feature. The installation involved clearing brush and roots from a dirt depression, and then laying down a felt protective liner, followed by a rubber liner to hold the water and create a pond. Next to the base of the old windmill dirt was dug out to allow a trough to be set in the ground, flush with the edge of the windmill base. PVC piping was laid in a trench dug to con-



Shown is the pond and fence after construction. New foliage will soon grow—making the site more attractive.

nect the trough and the pond. When the trough gets to within 3" from the top, water spills over into the PVC pipe which carries it to the pond.

The pond has been filling for about a month as of this writing [Oct. 16] and filling slowly. The water trickles in and the inflow is offset by evaporation so with cooler weather it will probably be full as of November 1st. This is a great source of water for wildlife and if needed, by equestrians riding the Pemberton Trail. All of us at the park are very excited to have this complete and thank everyone who worked on the project. I encourage everyone to hike out to see the feature which will improve with new foliage and become more attractive once the new construction look wears off.




Above is the water trough and in the background the pond filling and the new fence.



Editor's NOTES

Mike O'Connor

 Seldom do I ask people to follow my example because first of all, it's highly presumptuous and secondly, I'm not sure I've got many great examples to follow! The request below is the exception.

I volunteered to serve as editor of the *McDowell Messenger* after President Urban asked for a volunteer in the last issue. I have been a member of MPA for about four years and have been an inactive member—attending maybe one meeting during that time. I believe strongly in the McDowell Regional Park and the work the Association is doing and I thought it was time I got off my you-know-what and did “something” for MPA and the Park.

In this instance I feel qualified to ask those fellow members, who are inactive, to follow my example and become active! Come to the Annual Meeting; step forward when volunteers are asked for; sign up a new member. The park is a critically important asset to our area and it and the Association need support!



I hope to continue the fine work of past editors in publishing the *Messenger*. To do this, I'll bring up that “activity” matter mentioned above. I'd like to really open up these pages to the membership. Did you have an interesting experience at McDowell Park? Have an interesting photo you took while at the Park? Have some thoughts on what we should be doing or some issue related to the Park and/or the Association—or just news in general relating to the Park or association? Send it in! (My phone number and email address are on page 4.) Don't be bashful—let me hear from you.



Normally this would be a good place to introduce myself, but I've been nominated for the MPA Board, so my bio is on the next page.

Usually the “first time” anyone does anything, it is a challenge—but this “first issue” was enjoyable since I met a lot of great people. Putting out my first issue was made considerably easier with the exceptional cooperation of: Jim Urban, Rand Hubbell and Crash Marusich from the Park, Ed Kehe, Roy Kinsey and Merideth Hale. Thank you all.

Rio Verde park access: Guarded optimism

By RAND HUBBELL, *Supervisor*
MCDOWELL MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK

Months and years go by and still access to the park. The Park has received generous donations and each season the demand increases without apparently any action to gain access.

I can tell you two things at this juncture; 1. I don't have much to report and 2. I am encouraged at this time. Let me begin by telling everyone in the McDowell Park Association that I don't know of an issue which is foremost on my mind nor higher on my priority list. The trails crew for the parks department has a back log of trails to construct and this trail was not on the Trail Master Plan approved by the public and department in 1999. Therefore, getting it prioritized has simply not been possible.

The only constant in some areas of life and certainly the Maricopa County Parks Department, is change. In the past six months, the department has hired a new Eastside Superintendent and a new Assistant Director. Both are from outside the department and bring new eyes and new thinking to the department. The Eastside Superintendent is Teresa Retterbush, she grew up in Scottsdale, has an extensive background in recreation and was a Parks and Recreation Director in California. Our new Assistant Director is R. J. Cardin who has worked for the City of Glendale and Arizona State Parks.



I have found both to be very supportive and very much customer oriented. They both have spent much time learning the needs of the Park Supervisors, meeting with us as a group and individually. Superintendent Retterbush is also serving as Park Supervisor of San Tan Mountain Regional Park and has quickly learned about the need for more access points around that park. Both are set to meet with me and yes, we will visit the northeast corner of the park.

I will report back to MPA through President Urban and in the next *Messenger* with, hopefully very encouraging news.

Keith P. Clayton is a full-time Tonto Verde resident. He retired in Michigan following a 36 year career of supplying raw materials, engineered components and sub-assemblies to the Detroit based auto industry. Ten days after retiring in October 1998, he moved into his newly constructed Tonto Verde home, "Casa In Los Saguaros".



Keith immediately discovered his compelling fascination with the unique, special beauty of the park through widely exploring its many trails on his mountain bike. He quickly became acquainted with park personnel: Rand, "Crash" and the many crawlers and critters that make the park their home.

In addition to road and mountain biking, Keith is an avid big mountain downhill skier, runner, hiker, and self proclaimed fitness and golf nut.

Mike O'Connor has been a resident of Fountain Hills for 13 years. He comes from his home town of Hastings, Minnesota where he was publisher of the city's newspaper, the *Hastings Star-Gazette* which he founded. While publisher he was involved in a number of environmental issues and this has led to a lifelong interest in this area. O'Connor served on the Committee to Save the McDowells back in 1997. He enjoys golfing and hiking (the hiking has been mostly in the State Land—but that will soon come to an end). He teaches letterpress printing part-time at The Paper Studio in Tempe. O'Connor also has a letterpress print shop at his home—hobby only. He has been a member of MPA for four years and was just appointed editor of the *McDowell Messenger*.



MESSENGER Briefs

Craft Fair: Volunteers needed!

The McDowell Park is going to have a booth at the Fountain Hills Fall Arts and Crafts Fair on November 10th, 11th and 12th. The Park could use anyone interested in volunteering to help in the booth on any of the three days for a four-hour period. If interested, call Rand at 471-0173.

Lightning photos on display

The park's Visitor Center (16300 McDowell Mountain Park Drive) will host a showing of lightning photography by local storm chaser Susan Strom. Her work has been featured internationally in print and her photography of the local monsoons is breathtaking. Bring the whole family to enjoy this unique photographic art form. Susan does not enhance or alter her images in anyway; they are purely the essence of one of nature's most awesome displays. You can also check out her web site: www.lightninglady.com

Please call the Visitors' Center to verify hours of operation at 480-471-0173 before you drive out to the park. Visitors' Center hours may vary slightly.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Merideth Hale

Secretary & Membership Chairman

NEW MEMBER:

Suzi Delph

Frank & Judy Haggard

Jerry & Mary Hillhouse

Kathleen Howard, Ph.D

RENEWALS:

Jerry & Ann Baker (H)

David Calder (H)

Ginny Dickey

Ralph & Peggy Donnelly

Sunniva Graves

Frank & Grace Jakubs

Bob & Debby Kodl

Richard & Marguerite Lawler

Lin & Jane Lundgaard

Tom & Dolores Ryan (H)

Frank & Margie Sweeney

H = donations to \$49

T.B. = donations \$50 to \$99

M.C. = donations \$100+

We sadly report the death of Jane Lundgaard on September 29, 2006. Jane and Lin have been members for many years.

Additional November and December renewals will be mailed on the 1st of those months. In January, the bulk of our renewal notices will be mailed. If you have not renewed and have received a "renewal" sticker on your last Messenger, we hope you will renew. We need every member.

Thank you all!



The weather is great and it's time to gather family and friends and head out to the McDowell Park for a hike. Below is a partial list of some of the ranger-guided hikes. For up-to-date information you can call the park at (480) 471-0173; e-mail at: mcdowellmountainpark@mail.maricopa.gov or check the park's web site for the latest: <http://www.maricopa.gov/parks/mcdowell/> For upcoming months, check these sources.

November 10 — Wagner Trail Power Walk —Friday, 8:30 am

Join the ranger for a fun fitness walk on the Wagner Trail. The trail is 2.2 miles and has an easy rating. The trail is located just outside the park's campground. Hike speeds will average over 3.5 mph as this is an exercise oriented, non-interpretive hike. Please bring plenty of water and comfortable/sturdy hiking shoes/boots.

November 15 — Campground Fitness Loop —Wednesday, 9:00 am

This is a 4.4 mile hike on a series of trails with easy ratings. The hike will begin and end at the Wagner Trailhead. It will include the Wagner and parts of the Granite and Bluff Trails. This is a non-interpretive hike designed for the purpose of good, heart healthy exercise. Please be sure to bring plenty of water and comfortable hiking shoes/boots.

November 17 — Evidence of Life —Friday, 9:30 am

Join the Ranger for a quick lesson on tracking followed by a hike on the lush North Trail. During the hike all participants will search for evidence of the desert's elusive animals. The North Trail is located within the Palo Verde Picnic Loop and is 3 miles in length with an easy rating.

November 22 — The Green Desert —Wednesday, 9:30 am

This hike will take place on the lush North Trail. The hike is 3

miles long on an easy trail. It is an interpretive hike focusing on the adaptations of desert plants and the conditions that make the upland of the Sonoran desert such a unique place.

November 24 — Dixie Mine Hike —Friday, 9:30 am

This interpretive hike will cover information about the desert and the history of the area. It departs from the end of Golden Eagle Blvd. in Fountain Hills at the Dixie Mine Trail parking lot. This is a spectacular 5 mile trail over rolling terrain with some steep hills. Wear sturdy, comfortable hiking boots and bring plenty of water. Additionally, please bring the \$1.00 per person hiking fee for walking onto the park or your Park Annual Pass.

November 25 — Your Venomous Neighbors —Saturday, 11:30 am

Join the ranger in the McDowell Mountain Regional Park Visitor's Center (16300 McDowell Mountain Park Dr.) for a presentation on venomous creatures native to this area. All are welcome to come meet some of these creatures live and in person!

November 29 — A View from a Hill —Wednesday, 3:00 pm

Ranger led interpretive hike on Lousley Hill Trail. It is a 1.2 mile hike with a moderate rating. The hike will cover information about the desert and the park. The trail provides excellent views of the surrounding area.

November 30 — Fitness with a View —Thursday, 9:00 am

This is a beautiful way to help keep fit during the holidays. It's a ranger led 4.2 mile fitness hike on a moderate trail. The hike will meet in the Trailhead Staging Area and will take place on the breathtaking Scenic Trail. This is a non-interpretive hike, and is exercise oriented. Hiking speed will average 3 mph. Please bring plenty of water.

McDOWELL *Messenger*

P. O. Box 18613
Fountain Hills, Arizona 85269

THE McDOWELL PARK ASSOCIATION



**We'll talk about
cowboys at our Annual
Meeting—and other
official business**

SEE PAGE 3

Rio Verde park access

SEE PAGE 6

**Water, water every-
where—even at the
Pemberton well!**

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