



The Sonoran Conservancy of FOUNTAIN HILLS

Newsletter #2 2/26/04

Dear Friends and Members,

Recent IRS acceptance of our application for an independent "501" nonprofit status was exciting news. We are no longer affiliated with the Arizona Community Foundation, who carried us for years under their "blanket". As helpful as that relationship was to our small organization it was also less convenient and costly.

Now we can look forward to a long and healthy existence to support and care for the Town's non-budgeted needs in the Preserve. To that end, we look to members and friends for contributions of their time and talent in accord with Conservancy programs.

Since our last letter, we have marked out a new walking trail that leads upwards and westward from the Central trailhead area. With guidance from our trail building leaders, Bill Trask and Wayne Tall, fourteen of our Trail Stewards group have carved out a basic trail. Much needs to be done before we can call this a finished job, but the potential is fantastic. The views from the top of the first level ridge are as shown in the accompanying photos. We will locate some rock benches at this spot for all to rest and enjoy. The trail will go well beyond this point to provide a 3 mile loop for serious hikers.



Looking South toward Red Rock Mountain



Looking East to Four Peaks

We are also sponsoring a program to build a team of 30 persons who will become Trail Guides. To date, 18 persons have attended three sessions of training and have committed to serving as "access guides". By providing this service we expect to open up the Preserve to that group of the public who enjoy walking in the unspoiled sonoran desert.

This plan of enlisting volunteers to provide the link from a temporary trailhead at the end of Eagles Ridge Drive, across the MCO posted property, into the Preserve has been approved in principle. However, the Town administration is still working on the best way to cover necessary liability protection for MCO property.

As our training program expands Trail Guides will learn more of the flora and fauna as well as identifying important views, history of the area, etc. so that they can provide such information to any who ask.

Enclosed is a membership renewal form to cover 2004 activities and costs. Remember your membership fee and additional gifts are tax deductible contributions, and they pay for the trail building tools, radios for the Trail Guides, and mailing costs. The balance will be allocated to capital improvements, and grants for teacher directed school projects related to preservation principles, eco systems, botony in the Preserve, etc.