

Hike-a-thon Fundraiser for DFLT a Special Treat

The hike between Seven Springs and the Trail #4 trailhead in the Tonto National Forest has eluded many local hikers because of the transportation difficulties: you need a vehicle at both ends of the more than 10-mile trek. But it became the centerpiece of the tenth anniversary Hike-a-thon fundraiser held by DFLT this spring when twenty sturdy hikers raised the \$75.00 entry fee for the pleasure of following guide Barbra O'Brien along this renowned trail beside Cave Creek. For those who wanted a less strenuous yet still informative experience, DFLT Conservation Director, Thom Hulen and members of the Sonoran Audubon Society took hikers to DFLT's Jewel of the Creek Preserve where they explored plant and bird life.



Laura Cox, DFLT board member who helped plan the first Hike-a-thon ten years ago, did a superb job this time, signing up hikers, rallying drivers and arranging for after-hike hors d'oeuvres at Harold's. Hikes like these work both as fundraisers and as opportunities to take people onto the less-accessible trails nearby. By popular demand, DFLT plans to repeat the experience next fall.



Scholarship Awarded

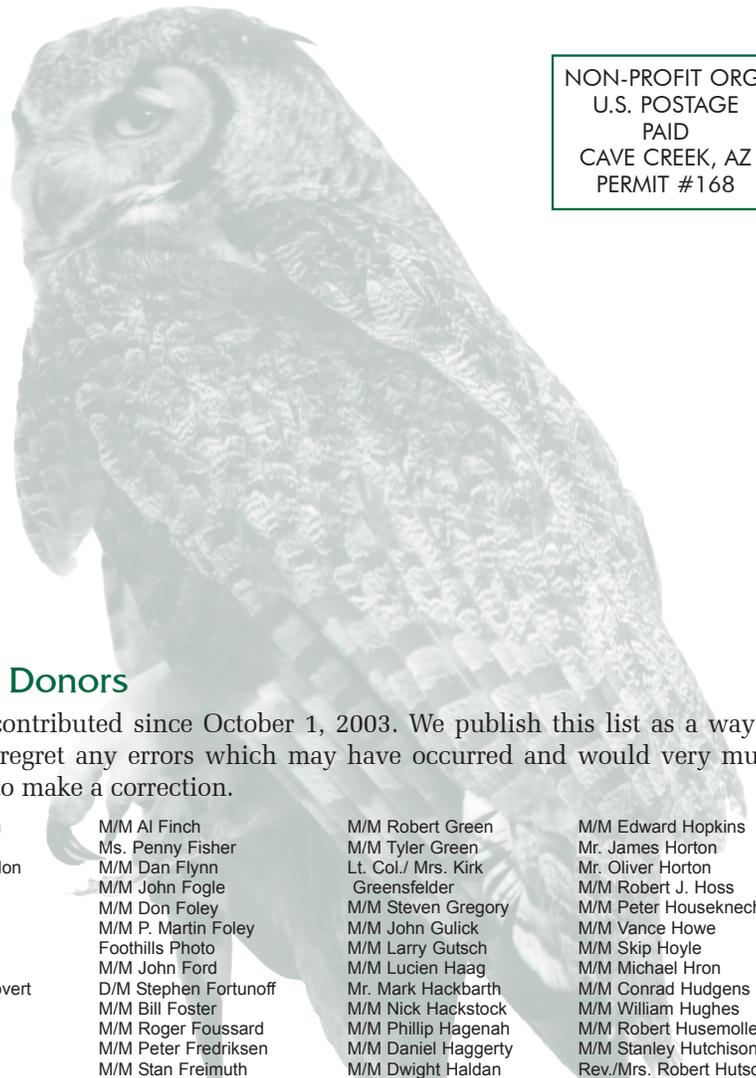
Adam Martell, a 2004 graduate of Cactus Shadows High School, was awarded the \$1,000 DFLT Environmental Studies Award. Adam intends to major in zoology at Northern Arizona University next fall.

Summer Wish List for DFLT Office

- Pentium III + computer
- LCD computer projector
- Map cabinet
- Utility Trailer
- Weed eaters (monofilament type)
- Any landscape tools
- Battery powered tools – drills or saws

Donors *cont. from back cover*

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Below are the DFLT members and donors who have contributed since October 1, 2003. We publish this list as a way of stating publicly our gratitude for your generosity. We regret any errors which may have occurred and would very much appreciate your calling us at 480-488-6131, if we need to make a correction.

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continued page 5



SUMMER 2004



TRUST

"In wildness lies the preservation of the world." Thoreau

The mission of *Trust* is to transmit the passion of the Desert Foothills Land Trust.

State Trust Land Reform – the Key to Our Future

by Michael Rigney, Executive Director

This month will hopefully mark the successful end to a three-year-long effort to reform the way State Trust Lands are managed in Arizona. As this newsletter goes to press, the Arizona Legislature is deciding whether to consider a reform package produced by a broad coalition of groups (including the Desert Foothills Land Trust). This reform package is vital to our organization's



Like many areas of state trust land, petroglyphs abound on this parcel of state trust land near DFLT's New River Nature Reserve. *Photo ThomHulen*

interest in protecting the most ecologically and culturally sensitive lands in the Desert Foothills region.

There are approximately 27,000 acres of State Trust land in DFLT's area of interest (which is bounded on the

south by Carefree Highway, on the west by Interstate 17 and on the north and east by the Tonto National Forest). The quality of life in this area will be affected in significant ways depending upon how these lands are either protected or developed. With the Arizona Preserve Initiative's fate clouded by legal challenges, passage of this reform package by the legislature and subsequently by voters in November may well be our only chance to save some of these precious lands for future generations.

The reform package will significantly alter the way that state trust lands are planned, managed, and disposed over the long term. The four major provisions of the package include:

1. Changes in the way the State Land Department is administered including the creation of a Board of Trustees and the allocation of up to 15% of the land sale proceeds to support better management of state lands;

2. Requirements for collaborative land planning processes between the State Land Department and local governments;

3. Changes in the way rural lands are managed, including requirements for sustainable range management and the ability for the Land Department to monitor rangeland health;

4. Immediate protection AT NO COST of 300,000 acres (including the remainder of Go John Canyon, lands bordering Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area and Cave Creek Regional Park, and Daisy Mountain near Anthem). This provision would also provide temporary protection for another 400,000 acres that could be permanently protected either through acquisition or "value" transfers.

Unfortunately, the legislature received this rather complicated package late in the session, and since the reforms require amending the State's constitution, many state lawmakers suggested delaying consideration. That would mean we would have to wait until the November 2006 general elections. And with State lands being sold for record amounts (\$100.3 million for a parcel the size of Go John Canyon) we simply cannot wait another two years.

I urge you to call your local representative and the Governor and urge her/him to make the State Trust Land Reform package a priority for consideration this year! The future of open space and scenic vistas and critical wildlife habitat in the Desert Foothills depends upon this reform package getting to the voters in November.

ⁱ For more detailed information on the State Trust Land reform package, please visit www.aztrustland.com or www.dflt.org/news/stl.htm or www.land.state.az.us/news/2004/ReformProposal.htm.

ⁱⁱ To find your legislator, please visit www.azleg.state.az.us. To contact the Governor's office, please call 602-542-4331.

MESSAGE from the President

It is gratifying to hear that so many of our DFLT supporters enjoyed a spectacular evening of friendship, gourmet food, music and an appreciation for our magnificent Sonoran Desert while attending the ninth Sonoran Symphony on May 1st. We especially want to thank our many generous sponsors and caring volunteers, whose names will appear elsewhere in this newsletter.

The MISSION of DFLT is to protect and preserve sensitive lands in perpetuity. We are dedicated to the success of this mission, but we cannot be successful without raising money.

The first means of raising funds is our Annual Membership Campaign. The DFLT membership year extends from October 1st to September 30th. If you have not taken the opportunity to become a member this year, please do so today. Membership funds are critical to our operations. For those of you who have joined this year, we thank you very much. Our new membership campaign, which begins October 1, 2004, will have a new and exciting format. Please be looking for it October 1st.

The second means of raising funds is with special events, including the Sonoran Symphony.

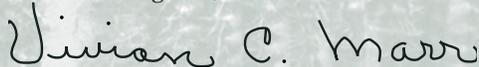
The third means of raising funds is with Capital Campaign programs. Our new Capital Campaign program will be in two phases. The purpose of Phase 1 will be to increase the Barry Goldwater Stewardship Fund. Stewardship is a critical and required component in the ownership of the 500 plus acres for which DFLT is responsible. The purpose of Phase 2 will be to develop funds for future land purchases, based upon DFLT's Comprehensive Conservation Plan.

You will learn about the details of the two phases of our Capital Campaign Programs from Ted Bosler, Campaign Chairman, and his stellar committee of DFLT supporters

I know that you are bombarded with requests for funds from many worthy organizations; however, the "Land We Conserve and Preserve Today" is a legacy we will leave forever. I believe that we all want "to make a difference in this world." I know I do, and this is a great way to do it!

Have a safe and wonderful summer.

With sincere regards,



Vivian C. Marr, President, DFLT

From the Director's Desk



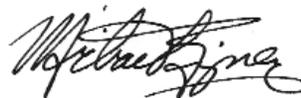
Usually we can count on summer to be a fairly relaxed time. Activity slows and we take time to catch up on the things we couldn't quite get done during the busy winter and spring season (just the opposite of most of the country). But not this summer!

If all goes as we hope, the legislature should pass a reform package within the next few weeks and we will need to gear up for a campaign to pass these measures in the general elections this coming November. The culmination of three years of effort on the part of a broad coalition that included DFLT, this legislation would substantially improve the way State Trust lands are managed and protected. In fact, if the legislature and the voters pass this legislation in November, many of the lands DFLT members have fought hard to protect would be conserved AT NO COST TO THE COMMUNITY! (See the accompanying article on the State Land Reform process.)

In context with the State Trust Land reform measures being considered by the legislature, DFLT is identifying areas of focus for our protection efforts in the coming years. This conservation plan should be completed by fall and will provide the guiding force for future land acquisition proposals and staff involvement in local and regional planning processes. We will unveil this new plan in late summer or early fall.

As you can see from Conservation Director Thom Hulen's article, stewardship of our existing 500+ acres is another major focus of DFLT's efforts. Stewardship is a vital part of our organization's mission, and we need to carefully plan for and have the resources to successfully monitor and steward the lands that have been entrusted to us IN PERPETUITY. Webster's New World Dictionary defines "perpetual" as "lasting or enduring forever," qualities we hope apply both to the land we protect and to our lasting ability to provide that protection. We hope you will join us in the fall when we kick off our "campaign for the future."

Michael Rigney



Executive Director

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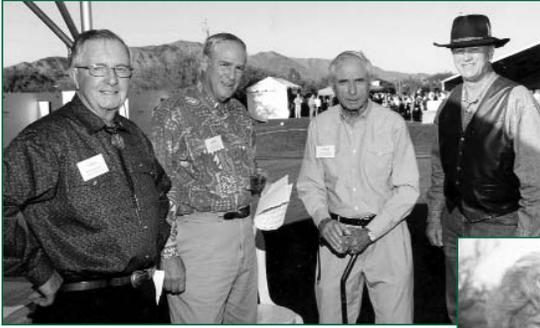
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Sonoran Symphony 2004 – It's About Open Space

The Sonoran Symphony is the Desert Foothills Land Trust's premier special event. It's also one of the Foothills' most delightful social happenings and serves, as well, to highlight DFLT's accomplishments in land preservation and stewardship. A significant portion of the trust's annual operating expenses is derived from this event.

Tonto Bar and Grill, the Phoenix Symphony and guest performers began to assemble for the evening's entertainment, a celebration of these wide open spaces in music and verse.

Phoenix Symphony Conductor Robert Moody, though claiming no western roots, still has a good time playing the



Clockwise: Sonoran Symphony greeters Ron Siepmann, Norm Jacobs, Harry Dalton, Dick Marr, Elysa Daniels and Marilyn Nadeau; Penny and Joe Low, (friends of entertainers Don and Waddie) and Maryann Kelly (Chamber of Commerce); Sonoran Symphony Chair Dawn Hopkins and Raffle Chair Erika Greaves. All photos John Brinkman, Foothills Photo

Held each year on a Saturday evening in late April or early May, the symphony is almost guaranteed fine weather. This year the sky was clear, the moon nearly full, and the ambient temperature somewhere between perfect and ideal. Guests began arriving at the Rancho Manana golf course around 5:30 p.m., creating movement and murmur on the green and among the tables; but not until the sound system was turned on and speakers began their welcoming addresses was it apparent that a crowd of more than 650 people had gathered.

Release of a rehabilitated raptor has become a tradition at the Sonoran Symphony, and this year it was Radio's turn. A Great-horned owl nursed back to health by the folks at Wild at Heart, Radio didn't even pause to say goodbye before heading off to the wide open spaces. A raptor in flight is always a moving sight and a reminder of DFLT's mission to preserve the land. As guests turned to an elegant dinner from the

part. Sporting a cowboy hat and boots and big belt buckle, he led his orchestra in lively music from a medley of Rogers and Hammerstein show tunes, to a selection from Grand Canyon Suite and through a group sing-along of "This Land is Your Land." Cowboy poet Waddie Mitchell and western singer Don Edwards collaborated on verse and song, sometimes nostalgic, often humorous, but always evoking the life of a cowboy and the connection to the great expanses of the Old West.

Many people deserve thanks for making the event happen: Dawn Hopkins, Event Chairman, and her hard-working and creative committee; Erika Greaves, Raffle Chair; Dottie Kobik, consultant; Robin Kilbane, DFLT Program Manager; and countless volunteers who manned the reservations table and welcomed the guests. It was a wonderful opportunity to show DFLT's appreciation for old friends and to make new ones. We hope to see you there next year.

Thank You, Raffle Donors!

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Stewardship of the land begins with planning. This is why DFLT has embarked on a Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the entire Desert Foothills area. It is best to look at the conditions of the land and the goals we have for the land and ourselves. Rare habitats and species are not the only conservation considerations. Representative habitats that include both rare and common components must be large enough and connected to other protected areas to provide avenues for movement and recolonization. In many cases, steep areas and flood plains are adequate choices for protected land, but not always. Many species besides us depend on open flat areas for survival.

The Comprehensive Conservation Plan, formulated with input from governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOS), will analyze and prioritize parcels of land that should remain undeveloped or not. This will

not be a binding document, but a map and a set of guidelines that will enable DFLT to make sound scientific recommendations for purchase, conservation easement or other forms of land protection. When appropriate, DFLT will partner with other organizations to protect land. For instance we have already worked with the Town of Cave Creek and the City of Phoenix to include areas into their open space plans.

Currently DFLT stewards 506 acres in thirteen preserves. Some of the preserves, such as the Ocotillo and Vista Ridge preserves, need little active management. Visitation by preserve stewards or DFLT staff once a month and annual photographic documentation is adequate to notice and record any changes. Occasionally trash must be removed. Preserves such as the Jewel of the Creek, Go John Canyon and the Caroline Bartol Preserve on Saguaro Hill have a lot of public visitation, and normal wear and tear must be addressed. Trails at Go John Canyon suffer from trespass by off highway

vehicles (OHVS). OHVS cause excessive trail erosion, and their users at times have little or no shame about cutting fence, pushing over gates, damaging plants or stealing signs. Unfortunately the Caroline Bartol Preserves suffers the sporadic indignity of vandalism, and repairs are implemented two or more times a year.

Stewardship, like most human activities, takes money for staff, experts, overhead and materials. New techniques are being developed, and personnel need up-to-date training and information. Volunteers are critical in stewardship, and without them little would get accomplished. Nevertheless money needs to be raised for stewardship, if DFLT plans on managing its current holdings and the conservation lands it acquires in the future. Just owning land or holding conservation easements is not always enough. Benign neglect has its virtues, but nothing substitutes for the knowledge gained by being on the land and experiencing what it offers.

Plants on the Preserves: The Unruly Wolfberry/Desert Thorn

Wolfberry, a densely-branched thorny shrub from 2' to 8' tall, grows in profusion along the new Harry I. Dalton Trail at the Jewel of the Creek Preserve. Wolfberry is the common name for most species of the genus *Lycium*, a member of the Nightshade or potato family (*Solanaceae*), which also contains the Sacred Datura, or jimson weed, and the tomato plant. There are, depending on whom you consult, some 10-15 species of *Lycium* in the Sonoran Desert, all looking somewhat alike, although different species are found at different elevations throughout the desert Southwest

Wolfberry, also known as desert thorn, is multi-trunked and unruly in growth. It can be spotted in close involvement with the mesquite or palo verde trees or growing in concert with jojoba or creosote shrubs, its spiky branches protruding sharply from a thicket of

nearly unapproachable vegetation. Occasionally a rather large specimen stands alone.

Leaves may be bright or soft green, succulent, minutely hairy, and/or leathery in appearance. They grow in clusters along the length of the spiny branch, and in this region they are usually less than 1" long. Leaves of different plants on the Jewel vary in width, indicating variations in species or just varieties of the same species. Most *Lycium* spp. are very responsive to rain and drought, sprouting leaves or dropping them opportunistically. During dry seasons, the plant may be leafless for months.



Lycium flowers are small, tubular and profuse, white to greenish yellow to lavender, and attractive to honeybees, butterflies and hummingbirds, though bees are the major pollinators. The fruit is a pea-sized, bright red, succulent berry, enjoyed by birds and other wildlife and, occasionally, humans, though the berries of some species are slightly bitter, and they may contain insect larvae. Native Americans ate them, either fresh or dried, but because flowers bloom sporadically, if at all, they were never a reliable source of food. Wolfberries are frequently found near old Indian ruins, indicating they were gathered and used. The Spanish word for *Lycium* spp. is *tomatillo*.

An excellent source of information about Sonoran Desert wildlife is *A Natural History of the Sonoran Desert* by the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, published in 2000.