

Desert Foothills Natural Resource Initiative

OUR UNIQUE PLACE

Located in the upper Sonoran Desert in Maricopa County, the Towns of Cave Creek and Carefree are home to a diverse and unique natural environment that draws thousands of visitors, as well as the year-round and seasonal populations within the Towns and in the surrounding areas. On the edge of the rapidly growing Phoenix metropolitan area, the Desert Foothills boast tremendous archeological resources, a diverse array of desert foothill plant and animal species, access to the Tonto National Forest, headwaters of Cave Creek, Black Mountain, easy access to outdoor recreation, and spectacular scenic beauty. Cave Creek and Carefree, in addition to the Nature Conservancy, the Black Mountain Conservancy and the Desert Foothills Land Trust have recognized the value in these resources, and the need to both preserve and enhance them.

OUR CHALLENGE

The very resources and amenities that make this area special, are also what drives the growth, and will continue to do so in the future. To date, there are great conservation success stories, and yet solutions will only grow more complicated in the face of increased development pressure, and in recognition that we are working to conserve a finite resource – open, undeveloped land. The challenge is to determine how best to preserve what is unique and valuable to the communities in the context of the future growth that allows for vibrant communities and a healthy economy. To that end, the *Desert Foothills Natural Resource Initiative* (DFNRI) is being proposed in order to create a tool for the municipalities, conservationists, and partners to understand how to best expend limited resources for the greatest impact and to enable all parties to work together *now* to ensure livable healthy communities for generations to come.

OUR APPROACH

- Step 1:** Create an inventory of known natural, recreational and cultural resources within each of the Towns and in the region. (See Below)
- Step 2:** Gather public input on the resource inventory and the goals.
- Step 3:** Make recommendations for implementing a land conservation program that works with willing landowners, including a definition of high priority resources and opportunities to create funding.

Using GIS technology, the DFNRI has collected data representing the known natural, recreational, and cultural resources for Cave Creek and Carefree. Represented here are three resource areas, as well as a composite map which shows where all the individual resources overlap. This portrays areas that, if conserved, would achieve the multiple public benefits.

Resource #1 – Riparian areas. Due to the presence of several creeks and streams, this area has significant water resources, including the important wildlife habitat that can be found along the creek beds. The map represents the streams and creeks, the 100-year floodplain and known riparian habitat.

Resource #2 – Archaeology. The data used to compile this map was derived from public records cataloging known archaeological resources and the opinion of local

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For More Information contact:

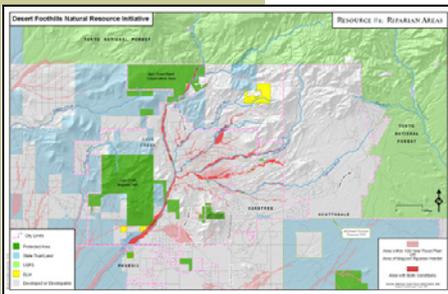
Black Mountain Conservancy
(480) 575-5835

Desert Foothills Land Trust
(480) 488-6131

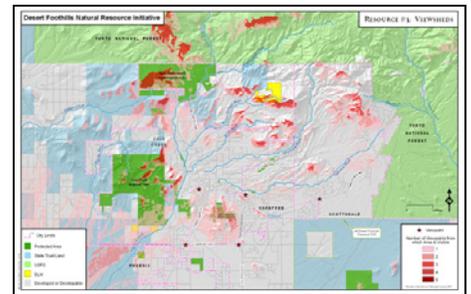
experts on the relative density of known and unknown archeological and historical site occurrences

Resource #3 – Viewsheds. It has been said that you know you’re home when you see Black Mountain. As the prominent high point that straddles the two Towns, Black Mountain is both a visual, and recreational resource. Currently only the upper most 250 acres are protected, with the remaining 500 acres with a potential for an additional 200 home sites. The viewshed analysis which is depicted in this map represents areas visible from 5 critical points in the Cave Creek and Carefree area.

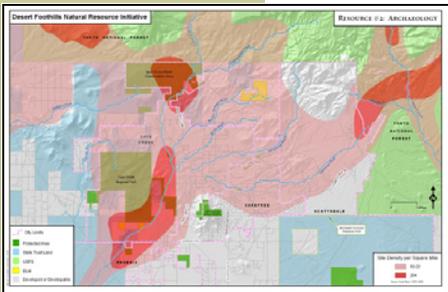
Composite Resource Map - Represents the areas of overlap of the 3 resource maps with an assigned value from lowest to highest depending upon the amount of resource overlap.



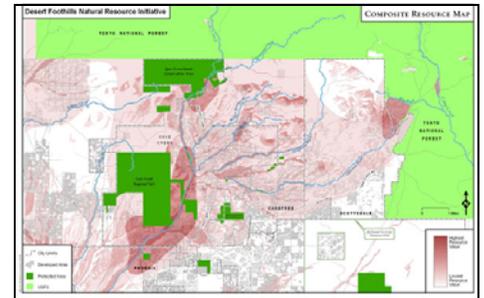
Riparian Resource Map



Viewshed Map



Archaeology Resource Map



Composite Resource Map

OUR NEXT STEPS

Based upon the suggestions and recommendations from our public open house meetings, we will revise our resource maps and composite map to reflect any community environmental assets not currently represented. We will post revised copies of the maps on the DFLT and BMC websites (www.dflt.org, www.blkmtncconservancy.org) and provide copies to both Cave Creek and Carefree Town Planning Departments.

Finally, we will work with the elected officials, community leaders and citizens to create recommendations for implementation, including potential funding options that would allow the Towns to preserve high priority natural resources.

OUR PARTNERS PARTICIPANTS AND SPONSORS

Partners

Black Mountain Conservancy
Desert Foothills Land Trust
Town of Carefree
Town of Cave Creek

Participants

Maricopa County Parks
McDowell Sonoran Conservancy
Tonto National Forest

Sponsors

The Nature Conservancy
Trust for Public Land