

FALL 2007



TRUST

“The splendor of the desert can last only as long as we care to preserve it.”

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

Richard R. Rudolph Memorial Garden Construction Underway

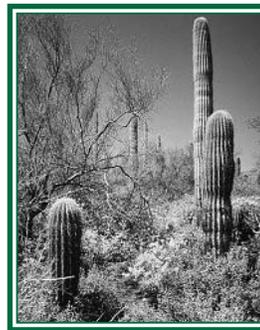
The Desert Foothills Land Trust is excited about having begun construction of our new entryway into the expanded Caroline Bartol Preserve at Saguaro Hill and the new Richard E. Rudolph Memorial Garden. This project is being done concurrently with the construction of the Desert Foothills Library’s new addition. The land trust is especially excited about this opportunity to expose a large number of visitors to the marvels of the Sonoran Desert in a relatively urban setting.

The preserve’s new entrance will be located near the library’s new east patio. From there, an interpretive trail will lead visitors to the new Richard E. Rudolph Memorial Garden which honors the deceased husband of a good friend of the land trust. The interpretive trail and memorial garden

will feature low-water use, desert-adapted plants and offer visitors information about how they may include these beautiful plants in their own xeriscape gardening. There will be a pollinator garden: hummingbirds, butterflies and yes, even bees. A sensory garden; agaves, succulents and cactus; native edibles and pincushions tucked everywhere. And if that isn’t enough, visitors who can pry their eyes off the plants will enjoy amazing views from the top of Saguaro Hill.

In addition to creating the Richard E. Rudolph Memorial Garden, the land trust has also expanded the trail network of the Caroline Bartol Preserve at

Saguaro Hill to the east onto land recently acquired in partnership with the Town of Cave Creek. Be sure to take time when you visit to enjoy our new trails with their interpretive signage.



The total cost of this project is \$500,000 and the land trust is pleased to report that we are well over half way in our fundraising. We still need your financial support for this project, and will also need volunteers to help install and care for this beautiful preserve. If you

would like to help in any way with this great project, please contact Greg Gamble.

DFLT Board of Directors

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President <i>Jacky Davis</i>	Treasurer <i>Maureen Berkner</i>
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Jacky Davis	Kristin Warren
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Staff

Executive Director	Greg Gamble <i>ggamble@dflt.org</i>
Conservation Dir.	Stacy Fischer <i>sfischer@dflt.org</i>
Member Relations & Operations Manager	Mary Warren <i>mwarren@dflt.org</i>

Sponsor Our Saguaros (SOS) Sows Success

As you recall, the devastating Cave Creek Complex Fire did extensive damage to portions of the Tonto National Forest near Desert Mountain. One result of the fire was the demise of numerous saguaros. A group of dedicated conservationists allied with Desert Foothills Land Trust and the Tonto National Forest formed “Sponsor Our Saguaros” (SOS) and led the effort to raise approximately \$18,000 to purchase and plant saguaros in the burned areas. SOS has successfully planted 400 saguaros to date and will be planting additional saguaros this fall. In the spring, SOS plans to have a dedication ceremony celebrating this successful project. Look for more information on this in our next newsletter or at www.dflt.org. There is still a need for your support, so if you would like to “sponsor a saguaro” or otherwise support the SOS program in its final push in the coming months, please contact Greg Gamble.

MESSAGE from the President

Dear DFLT members,

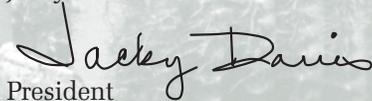
This spring when my husband and I were visiting my daughter and her family in southern New Hampshire where they are remodeling a 100-year-old house, we were the gofers. On one trip to the local Home Depot I told the salesman that we lived in Arizona, and he asked if I had ever heard of the Arizona Teacher's College in Tempe. He had gone to school there years ago and recalled the unique landscape, particularly the fact that they had to "go through the desert" to get from Tempe to Phoenix. So when his own daughter was attending ASU many years later and he asked her about crossing the desert to get to Phoenix, he was struck by her response. "What desert, Dad?" she said.

Of course, as someone has said, the world we leave is never the one we were born into, and that desert has been permanently transformed into highways and parking lots. So why devote effort, money and time to saving something that to others apparently seems quite dispensable?

Well, because it's not dispensable, not if we hope to survive as a species. Richard Brewer, Professor Emeritus of Biology at Western Michigan University, describes the history and activities of land trusts in great detail in his book "Conserancy: The Land Trust Movement in America" (available in the DFLT office for lending). He groups the reasons for land conservation into three main categories: aesthetic, practical, and moral, and I'm completely awed by some of his observations that have less to do with beauty or with a sense of spiritual connection to the earth (though these are powerful motivators) and more with an awareness of how completely dependent we are on the goods and services nature provides. Just thinking about the connections between the activities of microorganisms in the ocean and the amount of oxygen in the air, or between the recycling efforts of earthworms and bacteria and the fertility of our soil, should give anyone pause.

It's about biology, the stuff of "Planet Earth," which people do seem to be watching, and that's a good thing. It's also a good thing that, because of the efforts of DFLT members as well as the conservation activities of the Town of Cave Creek and many other dedicated preservationists in the Foothills, my New Hampshire granddaughters and their offspring, many years hence, should never have reason to say, "What desert?"

Jacky Davis


President

Staff and Office Update

Most people around here take it easy in the summer, but at the Desert Foothills Land Trust we apparently didn't get the message. In the late spring, we were saddened to accept the resignations of staff that have made significant contributions to Desert Foothills Land Trust's work in past years. As described in his retrospective in this newsletter, former Executive Director Mike Rigney has begun working for the Town of Cave Creek. Former Conservation Director Thom Hulen was lured away by the League of Conservation Voters and is now serving as their new Executive Director, and former Office Manager Kay Vargas decided to take some time off.

As Executive Director, I feel that the Desert Foothills Land Trust is very fortunate to have landed new Conservation Director Stacy Fischer who brings a wealth of talent and energy to our mission. New Member Relations & Operations Manager Mary Warren is already making a big difference in our work. As you may have gathered from Mary's title, we have made some changes in this position to enhance DFLT's service to our members. The goal is to better connect you all with the conservation work that you enable through your financial support.

Regarding the office, Stacy, Mary and I decided to take the opportunity of the staff turnover to do a little spring cleaning in the office. In addition to a new coat of paint and some general freshening, we have been updating our processes and



Member Relations & Operations Manager Mary Warren, Executive Director Greg Gamble and Stacy Fischer, Conservation Director make up the new DFLT office staff.

systems to ensure that this organization is working as effectively and efficiently as possible to conserve the desert. With the staff turnover and the overwhelming workload around the time of the Sonoran Symphony, we have been delinquent in our communications with you and some organizational processes have suffered temporarily. We think we have worked out the kinks now and we apologize if you were impacted by any oversight or delay.

Do stop by and say hello! We generally keep Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm office hours, but all three of us have job duties that take us out of the office so please call first if you plan to stop by.

Message from the Executive Director



When I first spoke with members of the Desert Foothills Land Trust Board of Directors about serving as the new Executive Director, I think I probably should have played hard to get and held out for a better seat at the Sonoran Symphony, or maybe some free raffle tickets. Instead of being coy, I gushed about the great opportunity we all have to conserve this beautiful landscape in which we live, and how I would enjoy being part of the effort. In former Executive Director Mike Rigney's "Retrospective" article in this newsletter, he rightfully notes that our conservation work has never been so difficult, especially given dwindling public funding for conservation and skyrocketing land prices. Nonetheless, I'm still optimistic for a few reasons.



First, in ten years of conservation work with The Nature Conservancy I have never worked in a place where the residents and local government appreciated their natural surroundings as much as in this area. When my wife, Darcy, and I chose a place to live we picked here. In addition to a rich cultural heritage, this area bests all others in this part of the state because of its spectacular and ecologically significant Sonoran Desert. As a hack triathlete, it doesn't hurt that it is cooler and has cleaner air!

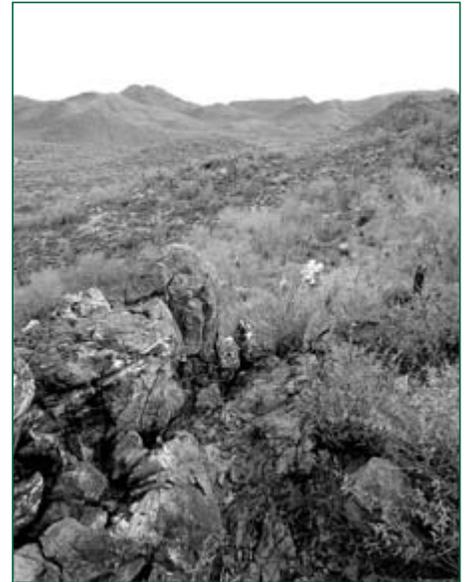


I don't think Darcy and I are unique; the vast majority of the people who live here love this place. When the community appreciates their surroundings as much as we all do, it makes conservation much easier.

The second reason that I'm optimistic is that I believe that land conservation can and does take many forms, and our collective ability to conserve what is special about our surroundings is limited only by our creativity. Acquiring land through purchase or donation, and acquiring voluntary land preservation agreements known as "conservation easements" on private land are tried and true ways of conserving land. As an example of a different way of conserving land, the Town of Cave Creek is working on an innovative density transfer project which will, when completed, conserve thousands of acres of State land while preserving the overall value of the assets managed by the State Land Department. Although there is a great deal of land yet to be conserved, there are many opportunities.

Finally, the Desert Foothills Land Trust is bubbling with ideas, energy, and projects. While we were sad about recent staff departures, DFLT is very fortunate to have landed Stacy Fischer as our new Conservation Director and Mary Warren as our new Member Relations and Operations Manager. Although the paint isn't even dry after our office's extreme makeover this summer (see the Staff & Office Update article), Stacy and I are already hard at work on a number of conservation projects. One of those projects is the expansion of the Caroline Bartol Preserve at Saguaro Hill and the development of the Richard E. Rudolph Memorial Garden – an outstanding project in partnership with the Desert Foothills Library and the

Town of Cave Creek (see the Saguaro Hill Update article). Considering some other exciting projects on which we've



been working, it is safe to say the Desert Foothills Land Trust is moving full steam ahead.

In a nutshell, one of my goals for the Desert Foothills Land Trust is that it be the premier community organization working in the desert foothills area. We will complete conservation projects that improve the quality of life in our desert foothills communities and objectively benefit all residents. And we will continue to strive to be a strong partner in the community, working with others to achieve the objective of conserving our desert for our common future. We appreciate your continued support for this important work!

Greg Gamble
Executive Director

Become a Land Steward!

The Desert Foothills Land Trust will start a 6 week Fall Stewardship training program on Tuesdays from 9am – noon beginning October 2 and concluding on November 6. This is a great opportunity to learn more about the place you live, get some fresh air and exercise, and do this all while conserving and enjoying our beautiful desert.

The goal of the stewardship training is to give you the knowledge you need to assist us in monitoring our conservation properties. The training sessions include in the field seminars on the natural and cultural history of DFLT's preserves and conservation easements. By monitoring and collecting data over time, we can assess changes to the property, help identify problems and preserve this valuable land for future generations.

Interested individuals are asked to attend all of the training sessions. It is our expectation and hope that stewards who have completed the training program will put their expertise to use helping the land trust check the condition of properties and maybe even lead walks.

Each of the six sessions will meet at the DFLT office, but will be conducted in the field. Please be prepared to hike about a mile each week, wear appropriate clothing and footwear. A training manual will be provided.

We realize that our stewards come to us with a variety of backgrounds. Some of you may be new to the desert and others could be teaching the class. Please bring your volunteer spirit and join us as stewards!

Please call the office at 480-488-6131 or email sfischer@dflt.org with your questions or to sign up.

DFLT NEEDS A TRUCK!

Do you have a reasonably high clearance pickup or SUV that is reliable, not getting enough exercise sitting in your garage, and that you are willing to donate to the Desert Foothills Land Trust?

Call or email Greg for information on how your truck can help us with our land trust work while providing you a nice tax deduction.

Thank you for your consideration.

When Greg asked me to provide my perspective on the Desert Foothills Land Trust over the three and a half years of my tenure as Executive Director, I felt challenged to provide some words of wisdom for him, our many community supporters and the Board of Directors. After the big conservation gains of the late 90's and early 00's when we secured Go John Canyon and the Jewel of the Creek, we hit a wall when the Arizona Preserve Initiative was declared unconstitutional. We quickly realized that in order for major gains in land protection to be realized, we had to promote substantive changes to our constitution and make conservation a priority for the general public – and the Conserving Arizona's Future campaign was born.

While a statewide effort was underway, DFLT staff worked with local landowners and public officials to conduct habitat restoration projects and preserve smaller areas. Notable among the latest preservation gains was the 26-acre Ranchitos del Rey preserve in Carefree. Our docent program was conceived and inaugurated with great success by Melanie Williams and former Conservation Director Thom Hulen. Many of our trails were expanded and enhanced and we developed a unique approach to cooperative land management through the Desert Foothills Natural Resource Initiative.

We were all devastated by the loss of Conserving Arizona's Future in last November's general election but life goes on. I decided I needed to pursue one of my passions – GIS and also decided it was time for me to explore other career options as well.

In looking back I realize that the DFLT was in the right place at the right time with the right people to capitalize on the brief window of opportunity the Arizona

Preserve Initiative afforded us in making substantial land conservation gains. We must now do the hard work of focusing on smaller parcels and build upon the great "conservation ethic" already in place in Cave Creek and Carefree. The Desert Hills/New River area is poised to grow rapidly and the organization will be challenged to spread that conservation ethic broadly in those communities.

DFLT is blessed to have a great history, energized new staff members in Greg Gamble, Stacy Fischer, and Mary Warren, and a great base of support. I will continue to volunteer to lead field trips and support the organization's efforts. It's fortunate that I will be close at hand working for the Town of Cave Creek as we all struggle to "preserve the spirit of the desert" together. If your travels take you to Cave Creek Town Hall make sure you drop in to say hello.

A Successful Sonoran Symphony

The 12th Annual Sonoran Symphony this past May was another wonderful success! As you know, the Sonoran Symphony is our biggest fundraising event of the year, providing the funds for a significant proportion of our annual operating budget.

Sonoran Symphony Chair Cheryl Van Brunt and numerous volunteers did an excellent job putting on this event for roughly 650 very pleased guests. Once more, the dinner and service by Tonto Bar & Grill was outstanding. The Desert Foothill Land Trust's signature concert combining the class of the symphony and the country music of our western heritage in an open air concert was again a hit with the Phoenix Symphony and nine-time Grammy winner Asleep at the Wheel combining for quite a show.

Planning is well underway for the 13th Annual Sonoran Symphony. Look for more information on this at our website, www.dflt.org, and in the next newsletter.

The Desert Foothills Land Trust would again like to thank all of you who sponsored tables, bought dinner tickets, and donated or purchased silent auction and raffle items. Your participation helps conserve our desert for our common future.



Phoenix Symphony and nine-time Grammy winner Asleep at the Wheel (above) combined for quite a show

Become Better Acquainted with DFLT....

Check out the DFLT website to find out more about the organization, desert awareness and all of our upcoming hikes and events.

You can also become a member, renew your membership, or sign up to volunteer all on our website!

www.dflt.org

or contact us at 480-488-6131.

*You Are Invited
to an Open House!*

*Please join us to see
the recent office renovations
and to meet the new
Desert Foothills Land
Trust staff!*

*October 17, 2007
4:30 pm - 6 pm
Light refreshments*

*The DFLT Office
7518 Elbow Bend, Ste B-4
Carefree, AZ*



2007 Fall Hike Schedule

In case you misplace your newsletter, all of our hikes for the fall season will be listed on our web site www.dflt.org.

- October 6** **New River** (Birding with Mike Rigney) ~ meet at the Roadrunner Restaurant.
8:00 A.M.
- October 13** **The Jewel** (Birding with Mike Rigney) ~ meet at DFLT office.
8:00 A.M.
- October 27** **P.A. Seitts** ~ meet at the DFLT office
8:00 A.M.
- November 3** **New River** ~ meet at the Roadrunner Restaurant.
9:00 A.M.

November 10 **The Jewel** ~ meet at the DFLT office
9:00 A.M.

November 24 **P.A. Seitts** ~ meet at the DFLT office
9:30 A.M.

December 1 **New River** ~ meet at the Roadrunner Restaurant
10:00 A.M.

December 8 **The Jewel** ~ meet at the DFLT office
10:00 A.M.

December 29 **P. A. Seitts** ~ meet at the DFLT office
10:00 A.M.

Please call the DFLT Office at 480-488-6131 or email mwarren@dflt.org to make reservations.

