

"The splendor of the desert can last only as long as you care to preserve it."

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

On Caring for Spaceship Earth

By Kay Vargas, DFLT Office Manager

Ed. Note: *After a recent field trip to the Jewel of the Creek Preserve with Conservation Director Thom Hulen, our Office Manager Kay Vargas reflected on what it means to "steward" lands.*

Marshall McLuhan once said, "There are no passengers on spaceship earth. We are all crew." How right he was! We are all working crew members of spaceship earth, and if we aren't we surely ought to be.

On a slightly overcast, but nonetheless warm November morning, DFLT Conservation Director Thom Hulen disentangles me from the computer, the phone and the temperamental copier and quite easily convinces me to trade them in for hiking boots, a walking stick and my camera. We spend the morning hiking the Harry I. Dalton Trail traversing the Jewel of the Creek Preserve and I begin to learn a little about what being a crew member on spaceship earth means.



Our first find is some nopales (prickly pear pads) that have been scraped and partially eaten by javelina. Personally, I prefer my nopalitos diced, grilled and tossed with a bit of lime juice and olive oil, but I guess javelina aren't that picky.

Once past Geoffrey's Bench and on the trail down to the creek, we come across a large deposit of horse "poop". Thom explains that unless a horse is fed weed-free hay, its poop is usually filled with various kinds of non-native seeds and fresh manure is a perfect environment in which those seeds can germinate and one reason why horses are not allowed in the Jewel of the Creek Preserve.

Animal waste is one way that non-native, invasive plants manage to get a toe-hold in the desert. Windborne propagation is another way and is why there are pockets of Bermuda grass in the Jewel. Yes, drought tolerant, invasive, opportunistic, disease and herbicide resistant Bermuda grass. This Bermuda grass most likely originates from local golf courses, parks and soccer fields and arrives in the Jewel via the wind, birds and muddy hiking boots. And, as

every gardener knows, Bermuda takes over and is darned near impossible to eradicate.

We pass by an old, unofficial trail that is being filled and re-vegetated. Thom says that the number and location of trails in the preserves must be limited in order to mitigate the



negative impact on the ecosystem. This particular wildcat trail has been partially filled with small to medium rocks and native grasses are beginning to re-vegetate it, too. Given half a chance, Nature will heal what Man has disturbed.

We forge onward. Okay, Thom's forging ... me, I'm attempting to absorb everything Thom is imparting, making rough notes and trying mightily to be slightly less klutzy than usual. And then the Jewel gives us a gift. Sunning herself on a rock just ahead is the most gorgeous tarantula I have ever seen. Beige and brown in color, she knows she's beautiful and poses quite prettily for the camera.

We make our way to the stream and cross the bridge. The extreme height of the recent flooding is evident in the debris field that stretches way beyond both banks and sometimes pretty high into the trees. Ash and pieces of charred wood, remnants of last summer's Cave Creek

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MESSAGE *from the President*

Dear DFLT members,

The Land Trust's first preserve came as a gift. Sharon and Andrew Dahlstream donated the 7-acre Herbert and Dorothy Watt Nature Preserve on Cave Creek to honor family members. Jack Houseknecht, DFLT's devoted founder, arranged for this gift in 1991, and that property, on the creek near Rancho Manana golf course, established DFLT as a protector of special places.

Since that time, other individuals have chosen to leave a legacy of protected land in DFLT's care. In 1994 Steve Bragg, a New River rancher, donated 22 acres on New River, near I-17. Now known as the New River Nature Reserve, this site has a year-round water supply and is thick with riparian vegetation and loud with birdsong. DFLT cares for it as a refuge for both wildlife and humans.

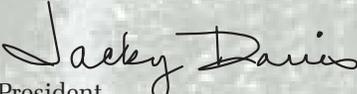
Carefree Galloway Wash Preserve was a generous donation in 1995 from Joe Fiorrilla and Roger Guffey. A few blocks from downtown Carefree, this property was intended for development, but under DFLT's stewardship it will remain a nature preserve open to hikers, horseback riders, birdwatchers and artists. An interpretive trail winds through the wash and up into the thick native growth on either side.

Carolyn Bartol, a Carefree resident, willed money to the land trust in 1997, and this bequest enabled DFLT to make its first land purchase. The Carolyn Bartol Preserve on Saguaro Hill features an interpretive nature trail; the Goldwater Memorial Garden at the top and several well-placed benches along the trail provide quiet sites from which visitors can sit amidst a saguaro forest and absorb the surrounding vistas.

In 1998 Mark Stapp, a local developer, and Jean Naef donated the Desert Enclave Preserve, 20 acres on Cave Creek on the east side of the Cave Creek Recreational Area, to DFLT. This floodplain roars with rushing water after a seasonal rain but invites exploration by hikers and horseback riders when it's dry. Nearby homeowners in the Desert Enclave development are the immediate beneficiaries of this environmentally aware developer, but anyone can visit.

All preserved open space will grow in importance and significance to our communities as surrounding land is developed. If you or someone you know would like to explore ways to leave such a legacy, please call.

Jacky Davis


President

Remembering Harry Dalton

by Norm Jacobs

Millions of baseball fans will remember Harry Dalton as a great general manager who built winning teams in Baltimore, California and Milwaukee and even won pennants and World Series. We in the foothills of the Sonoran Desert have another reason to remember Harry, for he had a tremendous impact on our community through his nearly 12 years of service to the Desert Foothills Land Trust.



Harry played a pivotal role as an officer and director of DFLT during its early and formative years. His fundraising leadership led directly to our acquisition of the Jewel of the Creek Preserve and more than half of the Go John Canyon Preserve. The funds he helped raise, which in turn were matched by the state, enable us today to perpetually preserve those lovely pieces of our desert for ourselves and our descendants.

Harry would be quick to credit others for their accomplishments, for he had a self-effacing personality. He enjoyed making others look good and avoided the limelight throughout his life, but for those who knew and worked with him, it was apparent that he was the keystone to DFLT's fundraising success, just as he had been to building baseball winners over the years. His success came from his love of baseball and for the desert in his adopted home. That love and personal dedication were evident to those he approached for support. Coupled with the respect in which he was held, he was a hard man to deny.

Harry's contributions to DFLT extended far beyond fundraising. While he was a quiet and understated officer and director, he was extremely insightful. He didn't speak often, but when he did, his associates paid close attention. He got to the heart of any issue at hand and provided wise counsel. He contributed as a team member just as he had throughout his life.

Harry was highly intelligent, possessed a fine sense of humor and enjoyed people. All these attributes made him a memorable person, but more importantly, he used his God-given talents to help leave us a legacy which will benefit the community forever.

Thank you Harry, for a job well done!

PARTNERSHIP FOR CONSERVATION



We all know that by cooperating we can usually accomplish more than by going it alone. It is in that spirit that DFLT is embarking on several new partnership ventures that will ultimately lead to a better community.

Our efforts to develop a comprehensive conservation plan for the Desert Foothills area took a giant step forward when we joined Trust for Public Lands, The Nature Conservancy, the Towns of Cave of Cave Creek and Carefree, Maricopa County Parks and the Tonto National Forest to form the Desert Foothills Natural Resource Initiative (DFNRI). This initiative will identify significant conservation opportunities in the Desert Foothills area and provide each organization and public entity with a priority plan for open space. The core of this plan is the GIS (Geographic Information System) assembled by The Nature Conservancy for DFLT's conservation plan. This data set will be expanded based upon the needs of some of the other entities and used as a unified guiding document for regional conservation planning. We are proud to partner with two nationally recognized conservation organizations, four governmental entities and a

sister land trust. We should see the results of the initiative later this spring and summer.

In another high visibility partnership, we are teaming with the Town of Cave Creek and the Desert Foothills Library to increase the size and interpretive facilities at our most urban preserve, the Caroline Bartol Preserve on Saguaro Hill. We are negotiating with the Town to split the costs of acquiring an additional 2+ acres adjacent to our current preserve from the Good Shepard of the Hills Episcopal Church. We are also discussing new programs, interpretive displays and a new entrance to the expanded preserve in conjunction with the Desert Foothills Library's building project. We are also exploring opportunities for enhanced native landscaping and re-vegetation of an old abandoned road in cooperation with the library.

In a world where controversy, conflict and negativity seem to be the order of the day, it's a pleasant surprise when groups with divergent goals can get together, cooperate and produce something that will have lasting value for the community.

Wildlife Art Show and Benefit

Desert Foothills Library and Desert Foothills Land Trust joined forces to host a unique fund-raising event to benefit the Library's expansion and renovation program and the Land Trust's efforts to preserve additional land on Saguaro Hill.



The "Wildlife Art Show and Benefit" took place Sunday, March 5 from noon to 4 p.m. at Desert Foothills Library, 38443 N. Schoolhouse Road, in Cave Creek. Nationally-acclaimed wildlife artist Linda Budge exhibited original oil paintings. In addition, note cards, posters, and bookmarks with images of

her artwork were given to donors who made contributions. The free event also featured guided walks through the preserve, music, wine, and hors d'oeuvres.

An Anthem resident with her studio/ gallery in Cave Creek, Budge has been painting for more than 30 years. During the first part of her career, she painted big game animals in Wyoming. While living in Colorado she focused on waterfowl and painted "duck stamps" for Ducks Unlimited. Since moving to Arizona, she is now inspired by the desert and its incredible light and shadows. She is continuing to support

conservation by working with the Desert Foothills Land Trust and now the Library.

"I am an advocate of both the Desert Foothills Library and Desert Foothills Land Trust, and I am honored that they thought of me to help them with this fund-raising event," she says.

For more information about Linda Budge, call her studio at (480) 595-9985 or visit LindaBudge.com.



Black Mountain by Linda Budge

Eleventh Annual Sonoran Symphony Celebration

On Saturday, May 6, 2006, the DFLT will host the 11th Annual Sonoran Symphony. Event Chair Linda Revane, Corporate Chair Marianne Mathews and their committee are planning a special evening filled with fun, laughter and, of course, great music!

Join us under the stars at Rancho Manana Golf Resort for a delectable gourmet dinner catered and served by Chef Eric Flatt and the staff of Tonto Bar and Grill

The Phoenix Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of Virginia G. Piper Musical Director Michael Christie, will once again provide their signature blend of western, symphonic music. This year, for the first time, the symphony will be joined by Grammy Award-winning Riders In The Sky, America's Favorite Cowboys, who will entertain us all with their traditional cowboy music and comedic hi-jinks. The music of Riders In The Sky is firmly grounded in the rich, American music traditions of such legendary cowboy singers as Gene Autry, Roy Rogers and the Sons of the Pioneers. Ranger Doug, Too Slim, Woody Paul (King of the Cowboy Fiddlers) and Joey the CowPolka King will have us laughing with their musical explanation of how the yodel was born, amazed by their intricate rope-tricks and wiping a tear or two away during beautiful renditions of such classics as *Cool Water*.

As you can see from the pictures, everyone had a great time last year. Sagebrush, Ocotillo, Palo Verde and Saguaro table sponsorship opportunities are still available and individual tickets may be purchased in advance for \$250 each by contacting the DFLT office at 480-488-6131 or the Symphony reservation line at 480-517-6475. Seating placement is determined by reservation and payment dates, so call soon if you want a great table!

With 28-plus years, over 5,000 performances and counting under their collective cowboy belts, Riders In The Sky, whose fun-filled performances have enchanted audiences of all ages, are themselves the stuff of legend. Y'all lasso yore fav'rite cowgirl or cowboy, spit-shine yore dancing boots and mosey on down for a rip-snortin', jingle-janglin' good time we're all gonna be talkin' 'bout for a long, long time to come!

11th Annual Sonoran Symphony
Riders in the Sky with *The Phoenix Symphony*
Rancho Manana Golf Resort
Cave Creek, Arizona

Individual Tickets \$250
Purchase by calling the DFLT office
at **480-488-6131** or the Symphony
reservation line at **480-517-6475**.



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Spaceship Earth, cont. from page 1

Complex Fire, mix with dried plant material to create a carpet of sorts along the banks of the creek. It's nature-made, truly organic mulch that will provide nourishment and shelter for a variety of plant and animal life.

We spot more javelina tracks and even some deer tracks in the mud along the banks, but no one except Miss Tarantula and a camera-shy tarantula wasp comes out to say "hi".



Eventually, we come to an area in which Michael Baker and the wonderful volunteers from Volunteers for Outside Arizona (VOAZ) have been working. They've used some pretty good-sized, hefty rocks to provide bank stabilization along one area of the trail. In another spot they've used rocks and large, flat stones to build a natural stairway up a previously rough portion of the trail. My out of shape calves and wobbly ankles cheer and yell "thank you VOAZ!"



A bit further on, Thom points out the native grass test gardens. Small areas alongside the trail that have been sectioned off and protected by chicken-wire fencing, they are used to grow native grasses that can then be used for re-vegetation. Unfortunately, our current drought has not been kind to them, but a little rain (pretty please???) may bring them back.

Near the test gardens is a patch of prickly pear cactus with spots of icky, white paste-like substance dotted across the pad (nopales). Cochineal, Thom says, the stuff used to make red dyes. The cochineal insect feeds on prickly pear and cholla cacti (genus *opuntia*). This little bug produces something called carminic acid to keep from becoming lunch for other predatory insects. The acid is extracted from the body of the insect and its eggs to make cochineal dye which is used primarily as a food coloring and for cosmetics. The new trend toward natural dyes has created resurgence in the popularity of cochineal dye. Personally, that was far more than I wanted to know! I will never eat a red M&M again!

Now comes the really fun part! Off the main trail we go into a back area of the Jewel to photograph something Thom told me about that I just had to see for myself.

Wildcat dumping is nothing new, otherwise archeologists would have nothing to find in the field. Pottery sherds are



one thing, but vehicle parts are an entirely different matter.

Tucked by a pool in the far reaches of the Jewel is a willow tree with automotive parts wrapped around its trunk! Dumped

or abandoned in or around the creek decades ago, the remnants of an old vehicle were likely unearthed by the flooding, moved downstream by the force of the water and ended up wrapped around a poor, hapless willow tree. Much of it is now unidentifiable sheet metal, but the remains of a distributor cap, radiator cooling fins and a large part of the chrome bumper are clearly visible. Unfortunately, this vintage vehicle will not be showcased at Barrett-Jackson next year.

The first lesson in stewardship: walk gently, pick up after ourselves and take care of the earth.

The word "stewardship" sounds a lot like the environmental equivalent of housekeeping: boring stuff that has to be done, and preferably by someone else. It's not boring. It's hard, tremendously rewarding work that must be done regularly to ensure that our beautiful, relatively unspoiled places stay that way. In many ways stewards work to allow nature to function as nature should and in other ways they work to ensure the rest of us have safe and adequate access to natural, open spaces.

Imagine stewards as "moms" with children, and we're the kids who've been leaving our clothes, crumbs and assorted clutter lying about. If we children don't pick up after ourselves, then mom has to do it or hire someone who will. Otherwise the crumbs, clothes and clutter will continue to accumulate until they overtake the allotted space and even begin to attract invasive, undesirable elements.

Mom, if she's wise, won't just go in and clean up the kid's room. That will merely allow the child to think his or her behavior is acceptable and "someone else" will always be around to pick up after them. No, a wise mom will teach her children to pick up after themselves and to have consideration for their environment and for other people.

We're all crew members on spaceship earth and we are all stewards. We must walk gently, pick up after ourselves and take care of the earth, for if we don't, who will?





2006 Desert Foothills Land Trust Hike Schedule

March 4, 10:00 am

DFLT Trek at P.A. Seitts Preserve – Moderate

March 11, 10:00 am

DFLT Trek to the Cave – Easy/Moderate

March 18, 10:00 am

DFLT Trek to the Jewel of the Creek
Easy/Moderate

March 18, 9:00 am

DAC Hike: *Desert Surprise* – Moderate

April 7, 10:00 am

DFLT Trek at P.A. Seitts Preserve – Moderate

April 8, 8:00 am

DAC Hike: *Desert Discovery*
(Plant & Wildflower ID) – Easy/Moderate

April 21, 10:00 am

DFLT Trek to the Jewel of the Creek – Easy/Moderate

May 6, 10:00 am

DFLT Trek at P.A. Seitts Preserve – Moderate

May 20, 10:00 am

DFLT Trek to the Jewel of the Creek – Easy/Moderate

Important Details

Descriptions of hikes are current as of March 2006 and are subject to adjustment because of weather and other unforeseen circumstances.

MEET: Desert Foothills Land Trust, 7518 E. Elbow Bend Road, corner of Cave Creek Road and Elbow Bend.

TIME: Meet for sign-in at DFLT parking lot, 15 minutes prior to scheduled time. Carpool to trailhead. Ride to trailhead is usually under 30 minutes with return to DFLT parking lot.

GEAR: Hat, sunscreen, water and sturdy shoes/boots. **NO SANDALS!** Walking sticks are also useful, but not required.

DAC Hikes are limited to 30 hikers, as are the Treks to the Jewel and P.A. Seitts. Treks to the Cave are limited to 20 hikers.

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

