

Phoenix Mountains Preservation Council, Inc.

PMPC ACTIVITIES UPDATE: 2025

HELLO PMPC MEMBERS: The *PMPC ACTIVITIES UPDATE* is an informative summary of PMPC's current priority topics and their status. We issue these updates between our full newsletters to keep our members informed and knowledgeable. We welcome and encourage you to send PMPC the protection topics and issues you believe need more attention, monitoring, and/or tracking.

Please e-mail PMPC at pmpcaz@gmail.com

PMPC Representatives attend Public Meetings and actively monitor the following Plans & Projects:

(1) Central Arizona Conservation Alliance:

Updates included the successful **Plant Swap Project** that has removed, 300+ invasive fountain grass plants from the initial targeted neighborhoods and will continue into Fall. They have expanded the number of neighborhoods included in the project and can include homes outside of the targeted project area that have the invasive grass. A new **Landscaping Guide** Using Native Plants has recently been published. The guide includes how to plan, remove and plant native plants and additional information. The guide is also available online. Updates to the 2025 **Regional Open Space Strategy** (ROSS) is available online <https://cazca.org> Some of the updates to the 2025 ROSS include:

Under Goal 1, additional objectives and action items were added that focus on biodiversity and habitat protection. For example, the objective: Maintain biodiversity in the Sonoran Desert by documenting, monitoring, and managing plant and animal species and advocating for improved human-wildlife interactions.

Under Goal 2, targeted adding waterways and a focus on biodiversity loss.

Under Goal 3, action items were added that focus on accessibility and safe spaces to engage more people in the outdoors. Specific action items added to increase education about ancestral lands and the tribal communities that call this area home.

Under Goal 4, action items were added to identify overlap between partner plans and ROSS goals, create linkages, and identify partnership opportunities to leverage resources and maximize benefits. This updated ROSS strategic plan delivers a connected, well-managed strategy that realizes the benefits of open space for people, environment, and economy to ultimately ensure that our beautiful, diverse and incredibly unique Sonoran Desert endures and thrives!

(2) Shaw Butte Access Road Update:

PMPC representatives attended the Public Meeting on the Shaw Butte Access Road. UPDATE: APS has replaced the Shaw Butte Towers with new towers. Currently, other communication companies continue to use the access road to connect new updated equipment to the new towers. The access road remains open to hikers. PMPC trail monitoring will continue.

(3) North Mountain Park Renovation Master Plan:

May 2025 The City has the architect and consulting group to work on the renovation and is currently working on the contract. The architect is Phil Weddle of Weddle Gilmore Architects. He and his firm are well known and have worked with the City on past successful renovations.

Sept 2025 North Mountain Park renovation planning, will have 30% plans to look at in the next few weeks. Construction Manager RFP to be finalized soon.

(4) Charles M Christiansen Memorial Plaque Replacement

September 2025 verbiage of original dedication plaque obtained. Donations for Cost of materials and installation from PMPC and Craig Weaver. Timeline: installation estimated by end of Dec. 2025. Proposed location to be determined.

January 2026 new projected installation date is April 2026

(5) Salt River Wild Horses Management Group:

September 2025 The Scottsdale Wild Horse Sanctuary in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, formal proposal to city of Scottsdale City Council to use preserve land for horse sanctuary. Letter of opposition was sent to Scottsdale City Council.

(6) South Biscuit Flat Area (North Park Area Development)

May 2025 The State Land Trust Department is working on the sale of the 6,355 acres of Az State Trust Land located west of Hwy 17 between CAP canal and Loop 303. This open desert land, on the slopes of Pyramid Peak on the northwest edge of Phoenix, is south of the Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Corporation (TSMC) growing facilities and targeted for development to support that facility and growth in the north Phoenix area. Phoenix General Plan Amendments and GUP rezoning applications have been submitted by the developer. City of Phoenix Management has been in negotiations with the AZ State Land Trust Dept and the potential developer (Pulte Homes) for PMPC Meeting Minutes 05/04/2025 Page of 3 8 several years. Roughly 2,082 acres of land within the project boundary is designated within the Sonoran Preserve Master Plan (SPMP) as preserve open space. Typically, the City of Phoenix would need to purchase any land from the State Land Department to incorporate it into their portfolio of parks and preserves for public use. However, in this project, the developers are considering donating approximately 2,100 acres of the Sonoran Preserve land to the City. Developers for the planned housing projects will be required to give large washes and mountain run-off land, etc. (undevelop-able land) that is not buildable to the preserves. In negotiations with State Land Trust, the Phoenix Parks & Rec Dept is working to get as much land as possible for preserves. An estimated 1300 to 1600 acres will be added to the Sonoran area preserve. Construction is currently happening on 51st Avenue from the canal to SR 303. There will be a lot (20,000 to 40,000) houses built in the area on the land sold to developers. Also that it doesn't currently appear there is a golf course planned by the developers. Phoenix North Parks website (<https://northparkphx.com/>) is a valuable source of information about the land in the area and the development. The Phoenix Parks Department has general markings of the parcels on the North Park website maps. It is mainly drainage areas, mountains and whatever surrounding areas the Parks Dept could negotiate. The Parks Dept also fought for existing wildlife corridors and tried to make them wide enough and to have ways for wildlife to get through the roads. There are already developed trails in the area and developers have planned additional trails because they see their value. in trails. However, the Phoenix Parks Dept will be responsible for natural desert area trails. The Parks Dept will attempt to make the best of the situation and make the trail connections where they can be in the areas bought by developers. With the help of the community and public input, the Parks Dept will identify designated routes/trails, indicate them on the maps, place signs and improve them to city sustainability standards. They will remove unsustainable and/or parallel trails as needed. The Parks Department has already been working with

Peoria to ensure connectivity between the north and south areas of this development area.

September 2025 North Gateway Valley Planning Committee, (NGVPC) Meeting on 9/11/25. Project discussion and info: this land is degraded low dessert. Trail route is because of Skunk Creek, Existing trails are user created by motorcycles, negotiations have centered around that the land is not developable. The land they are "giving" to the preserve is mountains and washes that they are not

able to build on. It is land they cannot develop anyway. It appears there is not any actual preserve land in that quadrant. Sonoran Desert Drive, as documented in the NGVPC Meeting Materials on the Northeast corner of I-17 and Sonoran Desert Drive has nothing planned yet, no development plans. There is confusion about the stated designation of the 112.47 acres as they could be referencing old management plans like the 1999 Sonoran Preserve Master Plan. A lot of those parcels show up, but the land was never designated as preserve land for a variety of reasons. All development is on the west side of I-17. Trail easements are not continuous to the preserve and need to be addressed by Parks At this point, the land to be addressed in the NGVP meeting via proposed amendments to the General Plan Land Use Map designation (GPA-G-1-25-2 & Companion Case Z-24-25-2) is of lesser concern to PMPC than the larger area of AZ State Trust Land west of I-17 between CAP canal and Loop 303 (South Biscuit Flat/North Park).

PMPC is seeking more info on South Biscuit Flat area such as current maps and materials related to its development. Amendments to the City of Phoenix General Plan must be finalized before the approximate 6,300 acres of State Trust Land can be sold and development plans drawn and available for review. Jeannie had a late May site hike with Debi Quarry (hiker who brought prospective development of this area conservation concerns to the attention of PMPC). Photos of trails, wildlife and crested saguaro were obtained. These photos and satellite location of crested saguaro were shared with Claire Miller as protection of native plants is and will be a requirement of City per the Native Plant Log. Additional advocacy for protection of crested saguaros is in process by Ms. Quarry with ASU's Oncology Research faculty studying mutations of Crested Saguaros. The Desert Botanical Garden's Saguaro Census and Program may also be advocates. Once actual plans are drawn and revealed by the developer (Pulte), actions for protection and conservation advocacy will become important. We are working on materials and location maps to share and learn.

(7) McDowell Preserve Overpass Bridge – PMPC letter of support

A letter of support was sent by Tice Supplee on behalf of PMPC to the Scottsdale Mayor and City Council on May 5th. It stated strong support of the recommendation of the McDowell Preserve Commission to study the feasibility of a land bridge over Rio Verde Drive to provide corridors and connectivity for wildlife in both the Phoenix and McDowell preserves.

(8) Verdin Project:

September 2025 update on infrastructure will increase support of Project. City Parks has an opportunity to bring water and electricity to Apache Wash Trailhead. Plans to review in the future. Trail connections to the North and South, to be discussed after plans are submitted and reviewed. Parks will make comments when plans are released. From Sonoran Desert Drive, it appears they made a mess, views show they bulldozed the entire site, including washes, not environmentally conscious at all. Flood detention to be built. Public land access routes are to be determined. Need to create trails with connections to existing trails within the upcoming plans.

(9) Gosnell Properties (including ROW trail 25)

Feb 2025 Overview: Over the past several months there has been communication about several long discussed land parcels that may now be available for sale or acquisition that could benefit both the Phoenix Mountain Preserve and City of Phoenix. These parcels may be contiguous to Phoenix Mountain Preserve land and/or hiking trails that are the responsibility of the City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department. The parcels are either currently owned by Robert Gosnell or entities associated with Mr. Gosnell. Robin Interpreter of Montgomery & Interpreter, PLC has agreed to work with PMPC to research and identify the parcels and provide legal consultation on their suitability for

acquisition and the process there of. These properties have long been a subject of discussion primarily between Mr. Gosnell and Terry Horne, former President of PMPC (2003-2005) and long serving SOMF board member (current treasurer.) It is encouraging that a potential resolution to these properties might be possible soon with clarification and involvement of all parties.

Discussion about the properties was started by Tice Supplee, Robyn Interpreter via Zoom and board members. Confusion existed due to the various properties being referred to by various names/titles (i.e. Gosnell Parcel, 16th Street property, Pointe Tapatio parcel, etc.), questions of their exact locations, property lines and parcel numbers on various maps being viewed. Robyn Interpreter stated that she had received documents from Terry Horne that appeared to have an incorrect APN provided by Robert Gosnell. She is trying to home in on the correct APN with the materials that were sent and stated she would research and send maps with brief summaries to clarify and facilitate action plans.

Property #1 – The Pointe Tapatio / North Mountain Preserve

Discussion: This property does directly connect to the preserve and was being used for parking. One member stated there was a delinquent property tax payment issue at one time that nearly caused a foreclosure but may have been resolved. Because of its connection to preserve land, this property is definitely of interest. Tice recommended that a real estate contract be carried out (essentially a donation?) and requiring it go through escrow and get title insurance (due to the craziness with this land in the past.) Then, have the title company do all the research on the property.

Property #2 – Trail 25 / Lookout Mountain

Discussion: Also referred to as 7th Street and Pointe Golf Course, this property is actually IN the golf course. Phoenix Parks & Rec as well as PMPC indicated the desire just for an easement for the trailhead. Per Claire Miller this easement request is in process.

Property #3 – 16th Street (South of Northern Ave.)

Discussion: The 16th Street property just south of Northern (about 2.5 acres)– appears isolated visually but seems to have 4 or 5 APNs. Four parcels are owned by PBG Investment Corporation (which is Bob Gosnell). The 5th parcel looks to be privately owned. Does seem connected or contiguous to Gosnell residence, therefore, may not be to the benefit of City/Preserve to own. A decent map of the property has been difficult to obtain Robyn stated. Maxine Lakin stated she recalled that behind the Pointe Tapatio there were 20 acres directly between Tapatio and the preserve that Gosnell was going to give to PMPC. Need to research old documents relating to the properties and discussions between Mr. Gosnell and Mr. Horne, if possible and if written notes exist. We need to have SOMF involved in further discussions.

September 2025 Important Details: Tax Liens: \$173,490.95, Parcel #164-20-005B, PMPC has offered to pay for the survey. But we need to review: Quit Claim Deed info, and legal parcel descriptions before we incur the cost. **Need to Determine:** would SOMF assume these lien costs? How do we pay these liens? Will he sign off on the transfer of the small parcel by the Pointe Hilton? Is it possible to deem this parcel as parks and preserve open space property, and the City of Phoenix pay the liens? Work in process with Save Our Mountains Foundation.

December 2025 SOMF is reviewing the contract stipulations and is receiving mixed signals on locations of parcels and property donation specifics. More time will be needed.

PMPC Events, Sponsorships and collaborations

04/06/25 **Spring In the Mountains** Event 9am-12pm

Location: Piestewa Peak Park, Saguaro Ramada information table, meet the PMPC board, community engagement, volunteer meet and greet, and hike.

04/13/25 **Slopefest**, info table + community engagement.

04/26/25 **Earth Day Celebration at Phoenix Zoo**, info table + community engagement

09/03/25 **American Planning Association, Arizona Chapter Annual Conference**, PMPC sponsorship and printed materials supplied for attendees.

09/27/25 **Butterfly Release**, PMPC engagement booth at this event. Gail Morris with Southwest Monarch Study (www.swmonarchs.org) will have tags if monarchs are spotted. Butterfly Wonderland (www.butterflywonderland.com) releasing 60 painted ladies at 10am.

10/18/25 **NMVC Festival in the Mountains**, sponsorship + community engagement event

10/24/25 **Summit for AZ Trails** (<https://networkforaztrails.org>) scheduled for Oct 24-25th, in Cottonwood, AZ.

11/15/25 **Phoenix Summit Challenge**: business card with QR code for Claire Miller to include in the pre-registration swag bags to be distributed on Nov 8th and 12th.

M.O.R.E. Program (Mountains, Open Space, and River Ecosystems Group)

12/14/25 **PMPC Holiday Party**: Hosted by Jeannie Swindle, PMPC Board, PMPC Members, and SOMF board, and community leaders attended.

Updates & Information about upcoming events in our Preserves:

29th Annual National Trail Trek:

Feb 21st, 2026: On-line Registration opens, Nov. 25th

Registration will fill quickly! Celebrate South Mountain's "National Trail," a historic and beautiful 15.5 mile trail from Pima Canyon to San Juan Lookout ridgeline. See Sonoran desert flora, native wildlife, and ancient hidden Hohokam petroglyphs. Registration Fee includes commemorative hiking shirt, lunch, refreshments, transportation to-from South Mountain Activity Complex. Information and register online: <https://phoenix.gov/parks/trails/ntt>

CAZCA All Partners meeting

at Desert Botanical Gardens, February 2026 <https://cazca.org>

Libby Goff Honoring Event:

Feb/March 2026 saguaro planting and seed balls in honor of Libby Goff. February of 2026, possibly at NMVC or a location in preserve. Seedball making event could be planned at NMVC in advance of launch event. Ongoing discussions for event and locations with Goff family.