



PMPC puts civic stewardship into action

Posted by [Kathryn M. Miller](#) | March 1, 2026



There is nothing like a desert mountain hike after a rain, and one group of Valley residents is working to secure Phoenix preserve land for future generations, including North Mountain Park, which is part of the Phoenix Mountains Preserve (photo by Kathryn M. Miller).

The Greater Phoenix area wouldn't be known as the Valley of the Sun without the natural mountain boundaries that surround it. And in the city of Phoenix, the more than 41,000 acres of preserve land

found in the smaller interior mountain ranges would not exist without forward-thinkers and collective effort. While Phoenix has a robust parks system, continued stewardship can be a heavy lift. That is where Phoenix Mountains Preservation Council (PMPC) steps in.

Any land designated as preserve within the boundaries of the city of Phoenix, which includes the Phoenix Mountains Preserve, South Mountain Preserve and Sonoran Preserve, fall under PMPC's advocacy efforts, said Stacia Hurst, board secretary for the organization.

"The Phoenix Mountains Preserve grew out of a grass roots movement, which began more than 50 years ago and continues today," Hurst said. "It has become a cause in which ordinary people are deeply and emotionally involved."

Efforts by individuals to save the mountains within Phoenix began in the early 1960s, but coalesced into a group effort when the Phoenix Mountains Preservation Council was founded in August, 1970.

"From land preservation to public education, the work of PMPC reflects a shared promise: that the Phoenix Mountains will remain open, protected and cared for. This is civic stewardship in action, where love of place becomes responsibility, and responsibility becomes legacy."

That understanding of community responsibility is part of what makes the organization unique. Their board is volunteer-led and their 80 members include hikers, conservationists, rangers and rescue teams, educators and volunteers, neighbors who live at the base of the mountains and families discovering desert ecology for the first time. PMPC brings these diverse voices together in collective action.

In the last year, PMPC strengthened partnerships that bring stewardship to life, Hurst explained. Working alongside the Save Our Mountains Foundation and the North Mountain Visitor Center, the organization supported educational and conservation-focused events that welcomed new audiences into the preserves. Behind the scenes, advocacy continued for land acquisition and preservation efforts, ensuring that key parcels remain public, protected and free from incompatible development.

In 2026, the organization will continue to focus on building long-term resilience for both the preserves and the people who use them. That includes addressing one of the most pressing challenges the

organization says is facing the Phoenix Mountains: the strain caused by extreme heat and inconsistent trail infrastructure.

“High use, undocumented trails, outdated mapping and limited signage contribute to safety risks, rescues and environmental degradation,” Hurst said. “These challenges affect not only park users, but also rangers, first responders, and nearby neighborhoods. At the same time, pressures including land misuse, rezoning efforts and incompatible development proposals, pose serious risks to ecological health and long-term preservation.”

Other 2026 goals include supporting the development and implementation of a comprehensive Trails Master Plan with the Parks Department; expanding educational programming; increasing memberships, donations and event volunteer crews; and acquiring volunteer crews to lead GIS mapping and updates of unused land parcels between residential areas and preserve boundaries.

Residents who would like to connect with PMPC will find them at the Libby Goff Memorial Seed Ball Toss & Hike, scheduled for Saturday, March 14 at 9 a.m.

The organization also partners with [Save Our Mountains Foundation](#) for the Festival in the Mountains each October, that highlights authors, creatives, small businesses, guided hikes, educational workshops and wildlife education. The community driven event serves a fundraiser to benefit the overhead costs of operating the [North Mountain Visitor Center](#) and Save Our Mountains Foundation projects and mission. PMPC meets the first Monday of each month at 7 p.m., at the North Mountain Visitors Center, 12950 N. 7th St. Find additional information at www.phoenixmountains.org or on social media:

@phoenixmountains.



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