Preserving the McDowell Mountains
Southern Region of the Scottsdale McDowell Sonoran Preserve - Scottsdale, Arizona

In 1993, Scottsdale citizens initiated the preservation of McDowell Mountains and surrounding Sonoran Desert. A vision was established to protect approximately 35,498 acres of desert open space on any roughly equal to one-third of Scottsdale's total land area.

The protected land is called the Scottsdale McDowell Sonoran Preserve. The goal of the Preserve is to create a large area of sustainable desert habitat, and to connect it to adjacent natural open spaces including the Tonto National Forest and the Maricopa County Regional Park.

Scottsdale voters approved initial funding of $2 million in the city's tax levy in 1993 to purchase land in the McDowell Mountains and surrounding desert. In 1996, voters approved using the tax to purchase land in an expanded boundary primarily north of the McDowell Mountains which is comprised of isolated mountains, deep washes, and lush Sonoran Desert vegetation.

In 2004, voters approved an additional $1.5 million increase in the city's sales tax for land acquisition and trail and trailhead improvements.

From 2009 through 2015, the City of Scottsdale worked with the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy to establish an annual appropriation of $2 million in the Growing Smarter Land Conservation Fund for a period of 10 years. The purpose of the fund, managed by Arizona State Parks, is to provide grants to local government agencies for the permanent conservation of open space.

In 2016, the City of Scottsdale approved a grant of $2.5 million to support the work of the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy towards the purchase of land for the McDowell Sonoran Preserve.

The McDowell Sonoran Preserve is managed through a unique partnership between the City of Scottsdale and the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy, where the City owns and operates the Preserve and the Conservancy supports the City in the important work of managing and protecting the Preserve.

The goal of the partnership is for the Preserve to be protected in a natural state while providing appropriate recreational opportunities for this and future generations to all come out and experience the splendor of the mountains and Sonoran Desert.

This poster displays the acquisition of nearly 13,000 acres within the Southern Region of the Scottsdale McDowell Sonoran Preserve. These acres were purchased from the one million-acre hospital property beginning in 1993. Additionally, land acquisitions by the City of Scottsdale ordinance are shown to display the growth of the Scottsdale McDowell Sonoran Preserve which has protected the McDowell Mountains for all to enjoy in perpetuity.