

Desert Foothills Scenic Drive Memory Park, Part I

A Description of the Park's Introductory Exhibit

Courtesy of Friends of the Scenic Drive

It's our hope that the Scenic Drive inspires "other communities to TAKE ACTION IN THE PRESERVATION OF natural beauties in their areas."

Vince Thelander, May 1966

If Friends of the Scenic Drive has its way, these words will be part of an exhibit designed to introduce visitors to the new Desert Foothills Memory Park. The Desert Foothills Scenic Drive, which will celebrate its 50th birthday in 2013, is an important part of the unique western heritage of the Desert Foothills area. Friends believes that the new park will help differentiate our community from other tourist destinations.

The purpose of the memory park is to:

Provide educational information for tourists and residents about the history of the Desert Foothills and Pinnacle Peak areas

Provide a historical context for the "Desert Foothills Scenic

Drive" section of modern-day Scottsdale Road

Encourage residents in other parts of Scottsdale to create similar exhibits that describe the history of their parts of the city

- Increase the site's tourism and educational value and indirectly bolster efforts to preserve the state trust land that surrounds the park as part of Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve

Proposed Site

The Desert Foothills Memory Park will be created on the site of the current Scenic Drive exhibits and monument sign, which is located on the east side of Scottsdale Road, just south of Jomax Road in north Scottsdale. A Maricopa County Sherriff's office was once located at the site, and in 1966 it became a small Scenic Drive park with picnic tables, restrooms, and a large concrete sign featuring "Desert Foothills Scenic Drive" in large metal letters. Beginning in 1994, Friends has led the effort to enhance the site, adding new exhibits and vegetation and modernizing the original large concrete monument sign.

The park site is on small parcel of land (less than one acre) that the City of Scottsdale leases from Maricopa County. The section (640 acres) containing the site is State Trust Land and is a threatened part of Scottsdale's Planned McDowell Sonoran Preserve.

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Existing Exhibits

In addition to the large monument sign, the site currently has exhibits, metallic plaques mounted on stucco-covered monuments, that provide information about the Scenic Drive, the Sonoran Desert, and local flora and fauna. In addition, a few small redwood signs identify some species of plants, and metal signs identify landforms that can be seen from the site; e.g., a wash, McDowell Mountains, etc.

Proposed Exhibits

Friends is suggesting that several “memory” exhibits be created. These will take the form of plaques mounted on a large panel or on freestanding stucco monuments. The centerpiece of the memory park will be an introductory exhibit. Other exhibits will provide more detailed information about:

1. Time and Events
2. People
3. Places
4. Preservation

This article provides draft descriptions for the introductory exhibit. Part II of this article, which will be published in *The Peak*'s July/August issue, will include draft text for the plaques that are proposed for the Time and Events, Places, and People exhibits. Part III will be published in September/October and

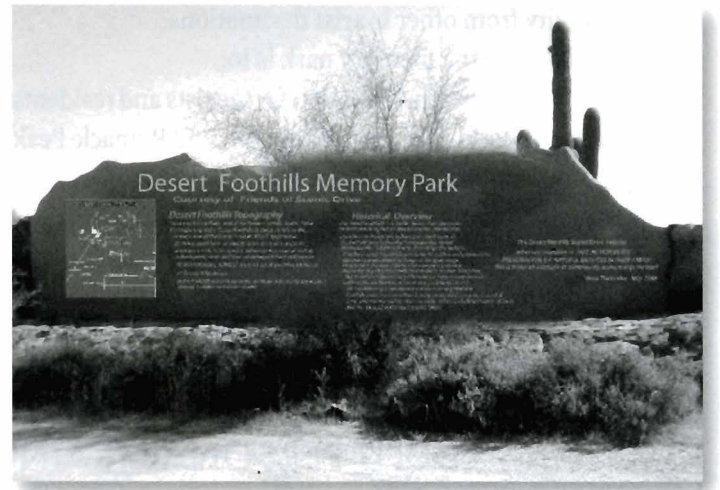
will include descriptions of the topics covered by the preservation exhibit.

Introductory Exhibit

The back of the existing Scenic Drive monument sign, a large stucco-covered surface, will be updated with information that introduces visitors to the Desert Foothills and the park's exhibits. This centerpiece will also be used to conceptually integrate existing and new exhibits. The back of the sign will feature the title, “Desert Foothills Memory Park,” and the Vince Thelander quote that introduced this article. Also on the back of the existing sign will be a large plaque containing a simple map denoting the Desert Foothills area, a second large plaque or lettering that describes the landscape of the Desert Foothills, and a historic overview. The map will show how the Scenic Drive relates to the Desert Foothills area.

Plaque: Desert Foothills Map

The purpose of this map is to define the area generally associated with the Desert Foothills and indicate major landforms



Layout, Introductory Exhibit by Horst Berkner

and roads, which for purposes of these exhibits can be defined as Happy Valley Road on the south, the Tonto National Forest on the north, the western border of Cave Creek Regional Park, and Camp Creek on the east. The major roads include Scottsdale Road, Pima Road, Cave Creek Road, and Pinnacle Peak Road. The diagram will highlight roads that existed in 1963, when the Desert Foothills Scenic Drive was created. Important features include: Black Mountain, Continental Mountain, Pinnacle Peak, Cave Creek, Camp Creek, Tonto National Forest, The Boulders, the towns of Carefree and Cave Creek, and the memory park's location.

Plaque: Desert Foothills Topography

The purpose of this plaque is to provide a description of the foothills landscape. The first draft of the text appears below in italics. A much smaller version of the map will also be on the plaque.



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The Desert Foothills is a special place where the desert gradually rises to the mountains, creating slightly cooler temperatures and a lush landscape. From this point, the elevation gently increases from 1,100 feet to 2,500 feet at the northern end of the Scenic Drive where “the heart” of the Desert Foothills, Black Mountain, looms over the towns of Carefree and Cave Creek. Just beyond the summit of Continental Mountain, the highest point in the Desert Foothills, is the Tonto National Forest, the northern border of the foothills.

Washes flow from the northeast during summer and winter storms. The stream of Cave Creek begins in the Tonto Mountains and flows southward toward the Valley of the Sun. To the northeast is Camp Creek, once another source of water in a remote, arid land. To the west is Cave Creek Road, the western leg of the original Scenic Drive. To the east is Pinnacle Peak.

Plaque: Historical Overview

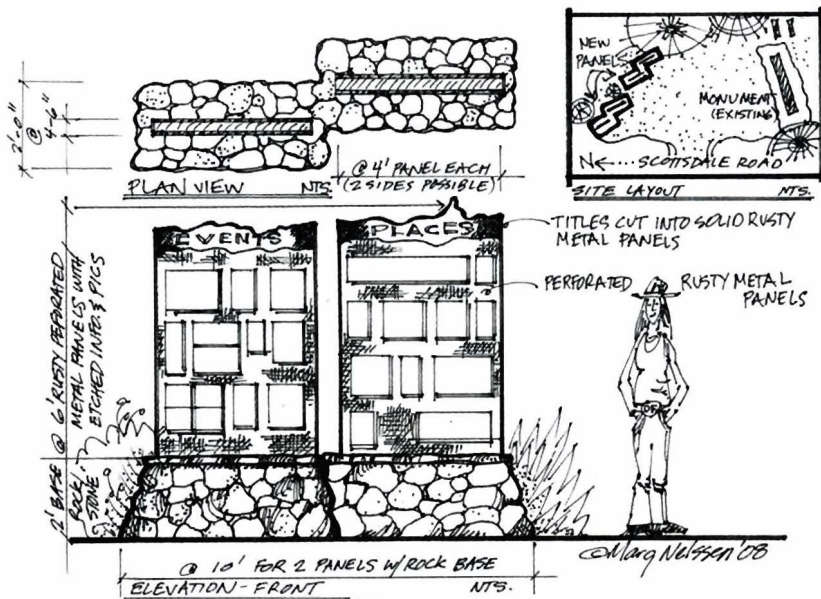
The purpose of this plaque is to provide an overview for the more detailed exhibits that the visitor will find on the site. The first draft of its text appears below.

Welcome to the Desert Foothills, a place of unsurpassed beauty where the fertile desert floor covers the forgotten footprints of Apaches, prospectors, and pioneers. Prehistoric Indians grew

food crops in the foothills long before Europeans “discovered” North America. U.S. Army troops chased Apaches through these lands. Prospectors searched the hills, and gold camps appeared and disappeared. Cowboys rounded up cattle, and sheep grazed the hills, washes, and open range. People suffering from respiratory illnesses came to be healed, dude ranches flourished, crude homesteads were established, tourism flourished, and many visitors returned to call this land home. New roads, neighborhoods, shopping centers, and planned communities were established. Foothills residents, fearing that development would destroy the very things that attracted them to this beautiful land, undertook a variety of preservation efforts, including the creation parks, preserves, and the Desert Foothills Scenic Drive.

Proposed Memory Exhibits

The plaques that comprise these exhibits will be mounted on a large panel on the site. Time and Event plaques will summarize important activities and dates related to the history of the Desert Foothills. Each plaque will have a topic title, an old photograph, and a brief description related to the topic. These plaques will be smaller than those used for the introductory exhibit but larger and containing longer descriptions than those used to describe places, people, and preservation topics. The



Layout, new Memory Exhibits by Marg Nelssen

Time and Events exhibit will have plaques for these topics.

- Hohokam
- Desplorado
- Apache
- Military Campaign
- Mining
- Ranching
- Homesteading
- Government
- Tourism
- Development
- Preservation

The Places exhibit will include topics such as Curry's Corners, Ironwood Golf Course, Black Mountain, The Boulders, Carefree, Cartwright Family Ranch, Dude Ranches, Carefree Studio, Military Trail, Cave Creek Station, tuberculosis cabins, Rawhide, Pinnacle Peak, and more.

The People exhibit will identify people who played important or interesting roles in the history of the Desert Foothills,

including Don Pablo, Old Rackensack, Big Brownie, Jerry and Florence Nelson, K.T. Palmer, Tom Darlington, Corkie Cockburn, Vince Thelander, and others.

For many years, residents have fought to preserve the unique beauty of the Desert Foothills. The Preservation exhibits provide information about organizations, ordinances, parks, and preserves related to that effort. For example, Cave Creek Association, Desert Foothills Property Owners, Desert Foothills Land Trust, Friends of the Scenic Drive, Southwest Wildlife, Wild At Heart, Coalition of Pinnacle Peak, Greater Pinnacle Peak Homeowners Association, McDowell Sonoran Land Trust, Black Mountain Conservancy, ESLO (Environmentally Sensitive Land Ordinance), Native Plant Ordinance, Scenic Corridor Guidelines, McDowell Sonoran Preserve, Pinnacle Peak Park, Desert Foothills Parks and Preserves, and more.

Your Support Appreciated

If you have suggestions about the memory park and/or the exhibits, please do not hesitate to contact us. We will be gathering old photographs and completing plans for the park over the summer. Volunteers are welcome.

Sources: "Discovering the Desert Foothills Scenic Drive" by Les Conklin, Scottsdale Magazine, 1996, *Cave Creek and Carefree, Arizona, A History of the Desert Foothills* by Frances C. Calson, Encanto Press, 1989, 1996, *Historic Scottsdale, A Life from the Land* by Joan Fudala, McDowell Sonoran Land Trust, 2001, *Carefree, Cave Creek Foothills, Life in the Sonoran Sun*, Foothills Community Foundation, 1990, 1993, *Arizona, A Cavalcade of History*, Marshall Trimble, Rancho Nuevo Publishers, 1989, 2003.

For Additional Information

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