

# BLACK MOUNTAIN CONSERVANCY

## February 2002

### **Honoring the Past, Preparing for the Future**

by Gretchen and Dave Mills, Co-Presidents

As Black Mountain Conservancy looks back with "**A Tribute to Patsy Cline**," we can also give tribute to those foresighted individuals who, 30 years ago, set aside 250 acres atop Black Mountain. In a community effort the Cave Creek Improvement Association sold "certificates" to local residents to raise \$625 to allow the County to purchase the top of the mountain from the Bureau of Land Management. Perseverance and patience kept the scenic beauty of the mountaintop from being sold to private speculators as happened on much of the rest of the mountain. Now it is our turn to work together to preserve and restore for public benefit the beauty that remains our Black Mountain treasure for current and future generations.

Black Mountain Conservancy strives to inform residents of the Desert Foothills that indeed Black Mountain is a treasured landmark threatened with development. Vince Francia, Mayor of Cave Creek, recently stated that he appreciated the efforts of Black Mountain Conservancy to preserve the 250 acres atop Black Mountain. We can feel good about our progress to date; but BMC must continue to garner public support and raise awareness regarding ongoing threats to the mountain.

**Black Mountain Conservancy continues to grow.** Val Root led the group effectively during the past two, formative years, and continues to serve on the Board of Directors. Thanks, Val, for everything you've done to lead and inspire us.

Here are some highlights of major accomplishments:

- Plans were initiated for the **March 17th Tribute to Patsy Cline**, a major fundraising event.
- BMC met with Maricopa County Parks & Recreation to discuss possible transfer of the 250 acres on the top of Black Mountain to BMC. Dialogue continues with an April follow-up.
- Black Mountain Canyon Properties discussed possible gifting of 10 acres of land to BMC.
- The Conservancy facilitated a meeting with town of Cave Creek staff and Black Mountain property owners. Discussions regarding the "trail" will continue.
- BMC's Board of Directors Expands: Gretchen Mills and David Schwan are welcomed.
- Gretchen and Dave Mills were elected Co-Presidents for a one-year term.
- Major strategies for 2002 identified; Board member "manager" assigned: **Acquisitions:** Dave Mills, Ralph Pipp; **Preservation Advocacy:** Val Root, Scott Sperl, Marie Carsia; **Fundraising:** Matt Dingman, Ralph Pipp; **Board Development:** Gretchen Mills; **Volunteer Programs:** Gail Peplau, Shea Stanfield; **Trail Issues:** Tom McGuire, Marie Carsia; **Administrative/Database:** David Schwan; **Newsletter:** Scott Sperl, Barb Bankord, Editor
- Several board members participated in the statewide Land Trust Association

meeting.

- BMC will attend the annual regional gathering of LTA in Moab, Utah in May.
- Black Mountain Note Cards, featuring winning photos from the 2001 contest, were sold and were well received by the community. Watch for news of the 2002 Photo Contest.

## **The goal of Black Mountain Conservancy is to preserve the ecological and aesthetic integrity of Black Mountain.**

### **The Town of Cave Creek Proposed Zoning Ordinance by Maria Carsia**

Effective hillside development regulations are essential to the sensitive development of the mountain while protecting property owners' rights. The Town of Cave Creek is currently in the process of updating its Zoning Ordinance, which includes a revised section regarding hillside development. The Cave Creek Planning Commission held several workshops and, thereafter, public hearings concerning the proposed zoning ordinance changes. At the November 1, 2001 meeting, the Planning Commission recommended that the proposed zoning ordinance be forwarded to the Town Council, with suggested changes.

The Cave Creek Town Council is hosting several work sessions prior to presenting a proposed zoning ordinance to the community for public hearings. The hillside development regulations comprise Chapter 11 of the proposed ordinance. If you would like further information or have questions, please call the Cave Creek Planning Department at 480-595-1930.

### **Preservation Advocacy Report by Val Root**

Our Conservancy has some quiet efforts working to improve Black Mountain's future. We are supporting (sometimes pushing) Cave Creek and Carefree governments to improve ordinances that guide building on the mountain. Both towns are responding with strong rules that call for approvals before grading, mountain-friendly home designs, diminished footprint of graded areas, etc. Look for a review of Cave Creek's proposed new hillside ordinances late this month.

Perhaps midyear, Carefree will resurface the new General Plan, which has much-improved rules for home building on (all) hillsides and mountains. Check the Sonoran News to see when these key reviews will be held in your community. Attending town meetings, commenting in those meetings on the need for strong hillside ordinances....all good ways to protect OUR mountain!!!!

# **Black Mountain...A Mountain Worth Saving!**

## **Black Mountain Conservancy Administration**

### **by David Schwan**

Black Mountain Conservancy has grown to the point where we need to collect all our materials, information and records into one central location. At present these items are stored at the homes of Conservancy members. Collecting the material in one location will allow easier access to Conservancy records. A central office, with part time staff, will also help us to be consistent. Simply put, the Conservancy has grown to the point where it's time to consider a more formal approach to doing its business.

One job for part time staff will be to operate the office. A bigger job will be to investigate and secure grants for the Conservancy. This is an important position because these grants will allow Black Mountain Conservancy to take title to land on Black Mountain for purposes of conservation. In sum, the Conservancy is growing. An office and staff will continue that growth and will further the Conservancy's goal to preserve, protect, and restore Black Mountain.

## **How Will the Conservancy Protect Black Mountain?**

**The Conservancy receives undeveloped land**, donated for preservation in perpetuity. Donation often provides a substantial tax benefit to the original owner. The Conservancy will provide long-term management to protect these lands. An added conservation effort is establishing permanent conservation easements on privately held lands.

**Black Mountain Scenic Preserve, above 2300 feet:** Special arrangements can permit appropriate use of the preserve for scientific, educational, historic, and charitable purposes. Because of the sensitive nature of the land and the private land surrounding Black Mountain Scenic Preserve, access is limited. The Preserve will not be a public park, but will be a habitat area set aside to protect native plants and wildlife that are currently being threatened by encroaching development and destruction of unique and fragile plants and animals.

**Your Contribution Makes Preservation Possible!** The native trees and saguaros, the wildlife, and scenic preservation are dependent on financial donations. As a volunteer organization, Black Mountain Conservancy can do the work needed to obtain title to donated lands and easements. Funds are then needed for stewardship, restoration projects, and for education about the wildlife and native vegetation that surrounds us. Black Mountain Conservancy is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) volunteer organization, dedicated to preserving, in perpetuity, the undeveloped land on and around Black Mountain. Help us to create the Black Mountain Scenic Preserve.

### **Tax Deductible Donations can be Mailed To:**

Black Mountain Conservancy  
PO Box 7192, Cave Creek, AZ 85327-7192  
Phone 480-575-5835