



Group aims to preserve mountains

Small membership ready to tackle issues regardless of the size

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For a group that focuses on big Valley issues, the Phoenix Mountains Preservation Council's membership is small.

The group has had 100 to 350 members, but currently has about 70.

"A lot of people come when there's a huge issue. What happens is they see a big issue, it means something to them, they all come out, our membership swells, but they miss out on all the very important smaller issues," group President Leslie Spencer-Snider said.

"Maybe it's only 100 feet of abandoned road adjacent to the preserves, but we need more people coming out to the meeting for those 100 feet," Spencer-Snider said.

The Phoenix Mountains Preserve don't have a voice to protect themselves with when bulldozers sneak up on them or when hikers sneak off trails looking for memorabilia to take home.

That's where the Phoenix Mountains Preservation Council steps in.

This local group fights for preservation, keeping abreast of everything going on in the mountains and voicing concerns to the state.

"Because the preservation council is a politically active group, we can go to these different meetings, such as the planning commission meetings or the neighborhood planning committee meetings; we can go to the park board meetings; we can put our voice into the uses of the preserves . . . to keep it a more silent and user-friendly preserve for all involved," Spencer-Snider said.

While this is the intended preservation council goal, it's not as easy for the group to achieve with as low a membership as it currently has, she said.

"We only have 70 (members) that are active, and only about 10 are really coming out to all the events that we need to be active in," she said.

"Sometimes people think giving money is enough, (but) we need more time, we need more people that are willing to dedicate time."

The group has been around since the early '70s, but Spencer-Snider said it is shifting its focus.

"We are emphasizing being proactive instead of reactive, and in order to do that, we need more members going to more meetings out there. . . . We just really need a much more active group," she said.

Terry Horne, preservation council member and Northeast Phoenix resident, said he encourages people to do their part in protecting the preserves.

"If we could just get all the people that live up against the preserve, we'd build a lot of membership," Horne said.

Horne and Spencer-Snider each said their hard work protecting the mountains pays off when they visit them.

"It really means a lot to me every time I go out and use the preserve that when I'm using it, I know I've given my time back to it," Spencer-Snider said.

Horne added, "We get to hike and bicycle and ride our horses right here in the middle of town and get to look at them (the preserves) when we're driving by instead of looking at houses."