

PHOENIX MOUNTAINS PRESERVES  
September 27, 1977

The 643 persons who attended meetings held by the Parks Board on the future of the mountain preserves in North and South Phoenix spoke with near unanimity and with great emotion about the necessity of completing the preserves. If there is opposition to the mountain preserves, it failed to surface in these meetings.

Given the options of Alternates 1 (completing the preserves as presently outlined), 2 (no more money) and 3 (a compromise requiring two-thirds of the funds required by Alternate 1), the public overwhelmingly endorsed Alternate 1. At the Moon Valley meeting, however, a vote was requested on restoring the original boundaries of the Preserves from which 3,000 acres were deleted in 1975, and all but three of the 300 assembled voted in favor of the original Preserve or as much of it as is not already developed.

The Phoenix Parks Board therefore recommends:

Completion of the Preserves as outlined in Alternate 1, with no further deletions, land exchanges or sales. The Parks Board would also look favorably upon efforts by private individuals or groups to acquire any part of the 3,000 acres deleted from the original Preserves and add them to the 1975 boundaries.

Although it is not the responsibility of the Parks Board to tell the Phoenix City Council how to finance the remaining acquisitions, two major alternatives have been proposed in citizen meetings:

1. The use of \$3 million in federal revenue sharing funds each year for four years with an additional \$300,000 during the fifth year. This was the method of financing originally proposed by the officially appointed Phoenix Mountains Preservation Commission, and accepted by the Phoenix City Council to supplement the \$22.5 million in local bond funds approved by voters in 1973.

2. A bond issue of \$12.3 million.

If a bond election is the method chosen to complete the Preserve, the Parks Board strongly recommends that the city undertake a cost/benefit study to determine whether or not the cost of city services to mountain properties would be greater than the return from taxes on mountain properties.

Recognizing that several citizens have threatened to sue the city if Preserve boundaries are changed to their detriment, the Parks Board also recommends a major promotional campaign to facilitate passage of the bond issue.

Another possible source of funds, which cannot be relied upon as a major source, is the Save Our Mountains Foundation, a tax-deductible foundation established to receive donations of money, property and securities. If the existence of the Foundation were

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well publicized, some funds might be raised to assist the overall program. Phoenix has plenty of mountains, trails, washes and viewpoints which could be named after large donors.

It is crucial that Phoenix establish firm Preserve boundaries and that, during the period that new funds are being sought to complete the Preserves, no more parcels be deleted, traded or sold.

The City can either use its contingency funds to acquire pressing parcels, declare a moratorium on further development or refuse to extend streets, water, sewers, police and fire protection to new developments proposed within the Preserve boundaries.

It is time Phoenix acknowledged its obligation to complete the Preserves and give this project priority over all more recent city undertakings until it is accomplished.

*Hillside ordinances*