



Ceremonial signing of H. B. 2218 by Governor Rose Mofford

The Saga of H.B. 2218 and How it Came to Pass

By Ruth Hamilton

(Editor's note: There were 1,236 bills introduced into the Legislature during 1990. Last year only 27.6 percent of bills introduced actually became law. There is no way H.B. 2218 could have succeeded without Ruth Hamilton's legislative knowhow, her many friends in the Legislature and her remarkable devotion to the Mountain Preserves. The citizens of Phoenix who set aside the Mountain Preserves as natural areas owe an incredible debt of gratitude to Ruth.)

It didn't just happen! It took a lot of luck, a lot of work and a willingness to compromise. But we now have a law in Arizona which prohibits construction of a highway within the Phoenix Mountains Preserves without the consent of the maj-

ority of Phoenix electors voting on the matter.

It began last fall when I approached Rep. Bill Mundell, Chairman of the House Environment Committee, and told him that PMPC wanted a bill to protect the Preserves from having roads built through them without the consent of Phoenix voters.

He agreed to explore the matter and met with a committee consisting of PMPC President Mike Goodman, Board Member and Environmental Attorney Jeff Zimmerman, Vice Chairman of the Phoenix Parks Board Penny Howe, Chairman of the South Mountain Master Plan Committee Donna Larson Maffeo

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and myself.

Rep. Mundell agreed to sponsor the bill, but wanted cosponsors and approval of the House leadership.

I tried to reach House Speaker Jane Hull, but she was either in a meeting or out of town. I was becoming frustrated when I saw Majority Whip Chris Herstam at a meeting and explained my inability to reach Speaker Hull.

He later met with Mike, Jeff, Penny and me and agreed to introduce our bill. He advised us to eliminate the Southwest Loop, already a part of the State highway system and likely to arouse much opposition.

We took his advice with the understanding that PMPC opposed the Southwest Loop and would continue to do so.

Jeff Zimmerman worked with Rep. Herstam's staff attorneys to formulate our bill.

At another meeting Senator Pete Corpstein stopped me and corrected my impression that he was not in support of the Mountains Preserves. I quickly set up a meeting with him for Past PMPC Presidents Penny Howe, Chuck Monroe and myself.

To our surprise, he so thoroughly endorsed our bill that he wanted to introduce it. But it was already "in the works" in the House, with Chris Herstam set to introduce it.

It was then my job to locate other sponsors. We were happy that both House

and Senate Majority and Minority leaders signed on our bill, along with the House Speaker Hull, six committee chairmen, the representatives of the district which includes South Mountain, and the ranking member of the House. The bill was entered, numbered - and then we began to hear that Phoenix was dissatisfied with it.

Our bill included key provisions of Chapter 26 of the Phoenix City Charter: "A charter city shall not sell, trade or otherwise alienate, redesignate or lease or remove any land within a designated mountain preserve except by approval of a majority of the electors voting thereon." But Phoenix did not want to have its actions restricted by a State law, and there were rumors of sister cities also objecting.

I set up a meeting with City Lobbyist Norris Norvold and a City attorney, Mike, Jeff, Penny and me. We agreed to delete that provision but stood firm on our main objective - to prevent the State or any political subdivision thereof from building a road through the Mountain Preserves without the consent of Phoenix voters.

Prior to the hearing before the House Environment Committee I wrote all PMPC Board Members requesting that they contact each Committee member. I personally visited or telephoned each Committee member myself.

At the Committee hearing February 2, I was prepared to deliver a great speech when Chris Herstam said, "Don't waste their time. Just thank the Committee see

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members." I did get to introduce our members who turned out.

Asked where Phoenix stood on the bill, Lobbyist Norvold replied that the City Council approved the bill as amended. The bill passed unanimously, then passed unanimously in the Rules Committee, and on February 22 was passed unanimously by the House, thrilling those of us in attendance.

On to the Senate. I had been telephoning President Usdane for several weeks, but he didn't return my calls. It took three trips to the Senate before I caught him in his office.

He graciously received me and told me he would assign it to Senator Corpstein's Transportation Committee. Again I wrote all PMPC Board members to contact Committee members and I personally reached each one by telephone or in person.

On March 22 the Senate Transportation Committee met. I was in the middle of a great speech when Chairman Corpstein said I had no opposition, so I answered a few questions and sat down.

Senator Todd made the Do Pass motion and it was unanimously approved.

It passed through Rules and was approved by the Senate 22 to 6.

Maxine Lakin went with me to the Governor's office to see if we could arrange for a signing ceremony. No one was there, so I left my name. Later I received a call that Governor Mofford would give us a

public signing ceremony on April 9.

About 20 people turned out for the ceremony - including Legislators, Parks Director Jim Colley, members of the South Mountain Master Plan Committee, Ben Avery and PMPC members.

Governor Mofford graciously posed for pictures, then signed the bill and presented me with the pen. It was one of the most fulfilling and proud experiences of my life.

THANKS - THANKS - and THANKS AGAIN to VOLUNTEERS

The PMPC wishes to thank the eager volunteers (too numerous to list) who worked in its booths at the Environmental Expo held February 24 & 25 at Tempe's PERA Club Park and at the Earth Day celebration held April 21 & 22 at Wesley Bolin Plaza at the State Capitol.

Thanks are also in order for KAET - Channel 8, which invited Dottie Gilbert to present a 2 1/2 minute commentary on a subject of her choice. She chose, of course, to showcase the Phoenix Mountains Preservation Council and its work in preserving our mountains. Her remarks were aired on the Horizon show May 7.

Thanks, too, to Tim Bombaci for the design and execution of the new PMPC Membership flyer. It contains, not only an explanation of the PMPC's accomplishments and goals, dramatic pictures and a membership blank, but also maps of Phoenix and South Mountain Preserve trails.