



Strategic Plan 2023

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Our Charter	3
Our Mission	3
Our Organization Supporters	3
The Park	3
Our Objectives	3
Acquire	3
Preserve	3
Make Accessible	3
The Need	4
Acquire & Preserve	5
What is the acquisition process?	5
How do we raise the funds?	5
Strategic partnerships	6
Fundraising goal gift chart	6
Top Gifts naming opportunities	7
Make the Park Accessible	8
A phased approach	8
Who will use the park?	9
Phase 2 enhancements	9, 10
Funding phase 2	11
How You Can Help	11
Financial donations	11
Volunteer	11
Spread the word	11
Testimonials	12

OUR CHARTER

Our Mission

Carefree Park is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization incorporated with the mission of acquiring, preserving and making accessible to the community 47.815 acres of open Sonoran Desert land. This is **the last remaining and only accessible large parcel of pristine Upper Sonoran Desert in Carefree**. It therefore has great community value.

Our Organization Supporters

Our supporters are volunteers who love the natural look and feel of the Upper Sonoran Desert in our area, and who are firmly committed to preserving it.

The Park

The future Carefree Park is a 47.815 acre plot of land limited by E Cave Creek Road on the north, N Mule Train Road on the west, E Stagecoach Pass on the south, and the extension of N Windmill Road to the east. It is currently owned by the Arizona State Land Department.

Our Objectives

Acquire

Our primary objective is to acquire this land before it is developed. In order to fund such an objective, Carefree Park will cultivate public and private partnerships, conduct fundraising activities, and accept donations from individuals, corporations and foundation grants.

Preserve

Carefree Park's strongest commitment is toward preservation of this land, which is home to hundreds of ancient saguaros, natural Sonoran Desert vegetation, and is a thriving wildlife habitat and wildlife corridor which must be preserved.

Make Accessible

With minimal impact to the landscape, parking, restroom, picnic ramada, a bike rack and low impact hiking trails will be created, making the park accessible to our community and visitors to enjoy in harmony with its natural inhabitants.

THE NEED

As Carefree residents have gone through the process of the General Plan revision, one thing has become abundantly clear – an issue that unites all is the desire for preservation of open space! A resounding mandate by 89.7% of survey respondents identified Natural Open Space and Resource Preservation as the most essential/most important trend in Carefree, and 81% of survey respondents indicated that Open Space Preservation is the #1 issue they want the Town to focus on going forward.

Yet, when residents and visitors want to hike in the beautiful Sonoran Desert or walk their dogs, they either have to do this unsafely in the streets, or they have to load up into the car and drive to Cave Creek or Scottsdale. Neighboring towns have actively created parks for their residents to enjoy, while Carefree has not. Yet...

We can change this with one final opportunity. We could acquire the last remaining large parcel of accessible land in Carefree, a 48-acre site on Cave Creek Road across from SkyRanch Airport, which is owned by the Arizona State Land Department. At least one developer has already expressed interest in acquiring it. And so a group of passionate residents have formed a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, Carefree Park, with the mission of acquiring and preserving the land, and creating trails with minimal impact to the landscape for residents and visitors to enjoy in perpetuity. With unobstructed views of Black Mountain to the west, and the Continentals to the north, this incredibly beautiful land is home to hundreds of old growth Saguaro cactus, and is a habitat for wildlife, including bobcats, coyote, deer, javelinas and more.

The land can only be acquired through State Land Auction and has an appraised value of \$6.3 million - \$6.9 million. Raising the funds will be a steep hill to climb, but with the support of the community, it is within our grasp. It is well worth the effort, and if we don't do something now, it will be lost forever.

Preserving our beautiful but fragile Upper Sonoran Desert, providing a safe place to be enjoyed by residents and visitors for generations to come, is a goal we must all work together to achieve before it's too late. More than an opportunity, it is a responsibility!

ACQUIRE AND PRESERVE

What is the Acquisition Process?

Since this land is owned by the Arizona State Land Department, we must go through the auction process.

In 2021, the appraised value of the land was \$6,965,000. While we anticipate a lower appraisal amount in 2024, our goal will be to raise \$7,000,000 in donations and pledges, which includes a contingency/safety factor in the event there is another interested bidder, or if the new appraisal amount is higher. Any excess funding will be utilized for eventual improvements.

Item	Cost	Notes
Complete online application	\$2,000	Start the process. Completed application with fee goes to Title & Contracts section to verify items associated w/ application. This can take 3 – 4 weeks. Application is forwarded to the Sales/Leasing section where an administrator will be assigned.
ALTA survey, Title Report, Phase 1 Environmental Report, Appraisal	\$35,000	Due diligence requirements. Applicant arranges for all reports other than Appraisal, which is arranged by AZ State Land and paid for by applicant. The existing Cultural Resources survey is still current and does not need to be redone.
Advertising fee	\$5,000	Assuming appraisal is accepted, the application goes to the Board of Appeals for approval. Public notice through print media for 10 weeks prior to the auction date is required by State statute. Applicant pays this fee in advance.
Auction Day	\$1,960,200	AZ State Land Department sets the date for the auction. Applicant must arrive at the auction with a cashier's check in hand for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) 25% of appraised value 2) Selling & administrative fee of 3% of appraised value 3) Patent fee of \$200 4) If applicant is unsuccessful, some costs are reimbursable.
Within 30 days after the auction date	\$5,001,800	Successful bidder must pay the full balance of the Sale Price.

How do we Raise the Funds?

A comprehensive Fundraising Plan will be implemented, and will consist of:

- 1) Information Blitz
 - Ongoing
 - Newspaper articles
 - Letters to the Editor
 - Meeting with Homeowner Associations
 - Information tables at the post office
 - Signage at the Land Site
 - Social media, including Instagram and Facebook
- 2) Informational/Fundraising Event
- 3) Creation of List of Potential Major Donors
- 4) In-person meetings with Potential Major Donors
- 5) Identification of and application for appropriate grants
- 6) Development of strategic partnerships

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Support from individuals, corporations, government entities and other nonprofit organizations is vital. To that end, Carefree Park has worked to develop positive and supportive relationships with:

- Carefree Town Mayor, Vice Mayor and Town Council
- Arizona Parks & Trails
- Maricopa County Parks
- Maricopa County Supervisor
- Desert Foothills Land Trust

And we will continue to develop and nurture supportive relationships with others as we work towards achieving our goal. Together we will accomplish our objectives.

Fundraising Goal Gift Chart

Total \$7,000,000

\$2,000,000					
Founding Donor					
\$1,000,000 Major Donor 1			\$1,000,000 Major Donor 2		
\$500,000 Major Donor 3			\$500,000 Major Donor 4		
\$250,000 Major Donor 4		\$250,000 Major Donor 5	\$250,000 Major Donor 6	\$250,000 Major Donor 7	
\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	
\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	
\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	
\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	
\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	
+ Individual Donors					

Top Gifts

Naming Opportunities

\$2,000,000 Name the Park
\$1,000,000 Name the Ramada & Picnic Area
\$500,000 Name the Major Trails
\$250,000 Name the Connecting Trails
\$100,000 Name the Bench
\$50,000 Sponsor the Saguaros
\$25,000 Name on Pavers

Donations may be made in the form of “Pledges” instead of cash donation. If we are the unsuccessful bidder, pledge forms will be returned, and financial contributions will be transferred to another tax-exempt organization, per IRS requirements.

MAKE THE PARK ACCESSIBLE

A Phased Approach:

The first phase that Carefree Park is undertaking involves raising enough funds to acquire the land through auction.

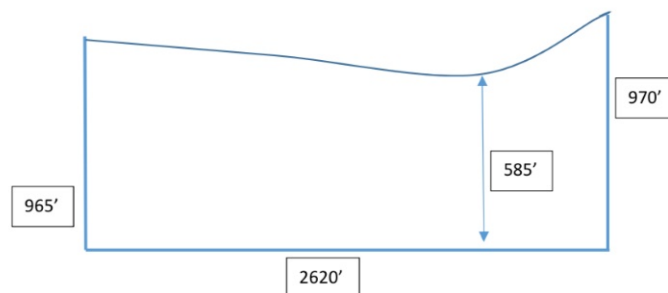
With the commitment of minimal impact to the landscape, the second phase will consist of preserving and making the land accessible. With the assistance of Arizona Parks & Trails, we have identified ongoing grants for which we can apply to fund the improvements necessary to ensure that Carefree Park is accessible and enjoyable for the community, including a parking area, bike rack, ramada with picnic bench, educational kiosk and restrooms, hiking trails, and possibly a fence and gate. Additionally, there are grants for which we can apply each year for ongoing maintenance.

We are currently consulting with volunteer architects to help us create structures which blend in with the natural environment.

Phase 2 enhancements will occur as funds are in place.






Approximate Dimensions







Who will use the park?

Located ¼ mile east of downtown Carefree, this will be the only local park, and will be utilized by residents and visitors of all ages and abilities who are looking for a natural desert setting to walk, hike, walk dogs, bring a picnic, or simply sit and enjoy the unobstructed views of Black Mountain and the beautiful Sonoran Desert. Some of the land is rolling, with natural arroyos, while a large portion is fairly level. At least one loop of the trail system will be accessible for wheelchairs. School children, disabled veterans, or older adults may utilize the park for group outings, and volunteer docents may lead group hikes.

Phase 2 Possible Enhancements

<p>Signage We expect minimal signage, to include the Park Name Park Hours Trail Rules Fire Danger</p>	  	<p>Estimate \$50,000</p> <p>Funding from donations and grants.</p>
--	---	--

<p>Parking area, Restrooms, Picnic Table, Shade, Educational Kiosk Garbage Cans, Dog Waste Receptacle</p>		<p>Estimate \$400,000</p> <p>Funding from donations and grants.</p>
<p>Border fence If it becomes evident that motorized vehicles are using the trails, a single rail pipe fence would allow wildlife through but keep motorized vehicles out.</p> <p>A pedestrian stepover would enable hikers to enter easily.</p> <p>A vehicle gate would enable entry emergency vehicles, working crews, and</p>	  	<p>Estimate \$45 per linear foot</p> <p>Funding from donations and grants.</p>
<p>One-time expenses Water & sewer hookup</p>		<p>Funding from donations and grants.</p>
<p>Ongoing Costs/Maintenance Liability Insurance Monthly Services including water, sewer and garbage Trail Maintenance Structural Maintenance</p>		<p>Funding from donations and grants.</p>

Funding Phase 2

Carefree Park is committed to continued fundraising to fund the Phase 2 enhancements, as well as for ongoing maintenance. In addition to soliciting gifts from individual and corporate donors, Carefree Park will research and apply for any appropriate grants, including:

Arizona Parks & Trails:**Land & Water Conservation Fund Grants**

- Heritage Fund Grants
- Recreational Trails Program Grants
 - Non-Motorized Trail Grants
 - Safety & Environmental Education Grants
 - Trail Maintenance Grants

Ongoing volunteer help will be solicited through local volunteer organizations, corporate volunteers, Eagle Scouts, high school students needing community service hours and residents.

HOW YOU CAN HELP**Financial Donations**

Checks made payable to Carefree Park can be mailed to:

Carefree Park
PO Box 6133
Carefree, AZ 85377



Online donations can be made on our website: <https://CarefreePark.org/Donate>

The pledge form can be found on this page as well.

Carefree Park is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, tax ID 92-1056445

Volunteer

Share your time and talents! All kinds of help is needed, from fundraising to helping with events to sitting at the information table at the posts office, marketing collateral development to social media and website skills.

Contact Wendy Mattes: wendy.m@carefreepark.org

Spread the Word

Make sure you are signed up on our website (www.CarefreePark.org). Tell your friends and neighbors. Share information with them and encourage them to sign up on the website. Write letters to the newspapers, including the Sonoran News (news@SonoranNews.com). Sit at the information table at the post office to inform Carefree residents. Be creative and spread the word!

Testimonials

“As our region continues to prosper and grow, the potential loss of previous open space continues to be a challenge. Maricopa County Parks believe that thoughtful planning, with citizen input, can help balance the demand for development with the need to preserve important open space parcels, contributing to a healthy region.”

“While the opportunity exists to set aside this land for current and future generations, I would encourage the citizens of Carefree to come together to engage in meaningful dialogue to weigh the long-term costs, benefits, and importance of establishing a community open space.”

RJ Cardin
Director, Maricopa County Parks & Recreation

“Our open spaces are incredible and part of our region’s heritage. The rugged and unique landscapes, along with a generally favorable climate, are part of what attracts people to the region. As People and industry continue to come to this area, we must also protect special places in our communities so that our children and their children can experience the landscapes we currently may take for granted.”

“Community open space parks provide residents with a higher quality of life and are passed from generation to generation.”

Thomas Galvin
Maricopa County Supervisor, District 2

“The citizen-driven effort to preserve this land and raise the necessary funding showcases the strong connection between community and the environment. It reflects a shared commitment to the preservation of natural desert open space, ensuring that it remains accessible and cherished for generations to come.”

“... this endeavor not only benefits the immediate community but has broader implications. Preserving natural open space contributes to environmental conservation, protects biodiversity, provides opportunities for recreation and education, improvises mental health, and encourages active lifestyle.”

John Crane
Mayor, Town of Carefree