

Cox Conserves Hero Nomination, 2011

Nominee Jane Rau is co-founder of the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy. The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy's mission is to champion the completion and sustainability of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve for the benefit of this and future generations. Through Jane's leadership and determination over the past 20 years, we have grown into a dynamic organization of more than 400 volunteer stewards who care for the Preserve, our community's living ecological treasure.

Through Jane's unending enthusiasm for the conservation of Arizona's open space, thousands of acres of urban land will not be developed. While no one person can be credited for creating the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, Jane has successfully influenced public officials, community opinion and the private sector to help establish this regional open space system, working tirelessly for 40 years to maintain the Arizona she fell in love with when she settled north of Dynamite Road in 1967.

As a Master Steward, Jane regularly mitigates human impact through her weekly volunteer work in the Preserve. She maintains and beautifies the Preserve, working on the trail building crews at the young age of 89! She is known for collecting cholla balls and replanting them in areas to discourage people from straying from the trails.

Jane has served two terms on the McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission. She also participates in Friends of the Scenic Drive clean-up efforts. She has served on the state's Native Plant Study, Dynamite Corridor Study, Scottsdale Road Charette and the Desert Foothills Character Study. Jane has been on the MSC Board of Directors since inception in 1991 and currently serves as *Director Emeritus*, attending monthly meetings and MSC events and activities as needed. Most importantly, Jane uses her notoriety and influence to consistently open doors that would remain closed to the organization without her.

Jane is not a wealthy woman, but shares what she has with those around her. Her energy is exceeded only by her generosity of spirit and passion for the preservation of her beloved desert and mountains. She gives everyone a hug when she sees you, and spreads joy and good news to most that she meets.

Jane has helped to create the largest urban Preserve in the country, considered the most significant wildlife habitat in metro Phoenix. She also helped create an organization through which individuals can take action to effect positive change for the ecological sustainability of the area. Jane's outstanding life and work has positively changed Arizonan's future, improving our lives now and for generations to come. We believe Jane to be the epitome of those annually honored through the Cox Conserves Heroes Award and respectfully submit her name for consideration for this prestigious honor.