



*Black Mt. News - 3 March 1983*

## Group strives for desert preservation

During the past few years, as the frenzy of development has intensified, I have met and talked at length with people of all ages whose worry at the destruction of our desert has been very real. As Southwesterners loyal to their and yet awesome state, they are appalled by the senseless "Greening of Arizona." They ask with alarm, "What can be done to protect our Desert? How can a solitary individual help save at least a part of the original, natural terrain?"

Full of despondency myself, I was at a loss to answer them satisfactorily until one day I happened to pay a chance visit to Ramsey Canyon, one of the Arizona Nature Conservancy's sanctuaries on the eastern slopes of the Huachuca range in southern Arizona. I was so impressed with what I saw that I became a Conservancy member on the spot and resolved, there and then, to put my shoulder to the wheel of this remarkable organization that is demonstrating a solid "Land Ethic" and offering hope for both present and future.

What exactly is the Nature Conservancy? First let me give a brief description of the private non-profit national organization from which sprang the vigorous Arizona Chapter. The Conservancy is a land and life conservation organization for life and land and inseparably linked. Its primary objective and function is to acquire land on which there is significant natural and ecological diversity and to preserve those values indefinitely. The Conservancy's approach is first to identify special areas that need to be protected — desertlands,

islands, prairies, marshes, forests, mountains, etc. and then, using sophisticated techniques and methods, to acquire the lands. Once a sanctuary is obtained, either through purchase or generous gift, responsible stewardship is required to complete the preservation equation. Since its beginning in 1950, the Nature Conservancy has helped protect over 2 million acres of our finest natural lands and the varied wildlife that inhabits them.

Since the Arizona Chapter was founded in Tucson, its main membership strength lies in Southern Arizona. However, I am firmly convinced there are many concerned desert-loving people in this area who, once informed of the excellent Conservation work done by the Arizona Nature Conservancy, will be eager to become members. It is, in all sincerity, a wonderful opportunity to contribute to the welfare of the much-threatened Great Sonoran Desert and its extraordinary plants and creatures. As a member of the A.N.C. Board of Trustees, I would be delighted to send you a brochure and membership application form. Please write to: Box 2568, Carefree, Ariz. 85377. Thank you.

*Geoffrey Platts*

**Note: Reader questions, comments and contributions are invited. Write: "A Desert Place," in care of The Black Mountain News, P.O. Box 1569, Cave Creek, Arizona, 85331 or leave at the news office.**