

# RangerGlyphs

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Natural Resources Division Newsletter

*What's in a name?* With the recent naming of two new trails at South Mountain Park I started to wonder how different areas came about their names.

Pima legend had the original name of South Mountain Park being “Greasy Mountain” from the story of Trickster Coyote stealing a heart from the fire. While stopping to eat it on the run he spilled the hot grease on the mountain, which is why the mountains north of the Gila River are stained a dark brown. Later on the mountains were called Salt River Mountains, due to their proximity in the Salt River Valley, and in the 30’s took on the name we know today; South Mountain Park.

Entering into South Mountain Park, off Central Ave, you are now on Stephen Mather Drive. Mather was the man responsible for the creation of the National Park Service and instrumental in helping coordinate the early engineering of South Mountain Park. He suggested rather than making SMP a National Monument and encountering difficulties in getting necessary appropriations to develop the park, that instead have the Honorable Carl Hayden introduce a bill in Congress allowing the City of Phoenix to purchase the land for \$18,000.

Prior to the land being purchased in 1924, South Mountain Park had a major construction project. In 1873 it was decided that the telegraph line that went from San Diego to Maricopa Wells was to be extended north to Prescott. That pass that the telegraph went through is known today as Telegraph Pass. Spanning the center of the park Telegraph Pass can be accessed from the Desert Foothills Trailhead, located of course in Desert Foothills!

With no money to build trails after SMP was purchased, the first two trails were privately funded. Hieroglyphic Canyon Trail was sponsored by Dwight Heard, and the Kiwanis Trail by the Kiwanis Club. Why Hieroglyphic Canyon vs. Petroglyphs Canyon? Perhaps due to America’s fascination with all that was Egyptian at the time and the lack of public knowledge to what petroglyphs were. In newspaper reports of that time petroglyphs were referred to as pictographs, which are a drawn or painted on the rock surface (similar to what is found in Egypt) vs. petroglyphs which are an engraved pictures created by removing parts of the rock to create the design.

Mining was common at South Mountain Park in the 1880’s. Over 7,000 oz of gold, 5000 oz of silver and 28,000 lbs of copper were eventually mined out of SMP. The most famous of all the claims was the Max Delta Mine. Today all mines are closed to the public. The Max Delta Trail takes you by one of the bigger claim sites.



Hiking up Pyramid Trail, Telegraph Pass (prior to Ahwatukee Foothills), View from Eagle’s Nest

# A Rose by any other Name



Goat Hill

Goat Hill, so named for the supposed sheep/goat that were herded in the area as late as the 1940's, is the most prominent peak west of Ranger Trail. East of Goat Hill you will espy Eagle's Nest, the stone structure built in the '30s by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). Look down, and the pull out you see on the Summit Road is called Eagle's Landing, a prime location for taking photos of the Phoenix City Skyline and sunset shots across the mountains.

Hidden Valley was named in the 1930's by the then Landscape Superintendent of the CCC. He wrote in an article titled *Little Known Wonders of the South Mountain's* "...continue up this canyon and you will come to a beautiful valley circular in shape with a large flat rock in the center out of which grows quite a number of cactus, apparently grown out of the solid rock face. We named this Hidden Valley as it is enclosed by peaks all around". He continues with a description of what we know today as Fat Man's Pass, "If you take the time to continue up the wash toward the west you will soon come to a crevice in the granite about a foot wide and worn smooth as glass by the addition of water, all of which has come through this opening in its way to the lower levels. We named this place Fatman's misery, as it is quite a close fit for an ordinary person.

Marcos de Niza Trail, so named for the rock bearing the 1839 inscription of the Franciscan Padre. De Niza accompanied Francisco Vásquez de Coronado on his search for the Seven Cities of Cibola. It was determined to be a fake inscription, but is still a very cool folklore tale.

Holbert Trail was named after the first caretaker of South Mountain Park, Charles M. Holbert. Dobbins Lookout got its name from J. C. Dobbins, who was Chairman of the City of Phoenix planning committee in the 20's when the park was petitioning the United States Government to purchase 17,000 acres of land to make SMP a reality.

The park's most interesting geological wonder is the "Chinese Wall" a natural dike made of black lava stretching like the Great Wall of China over the top of South Mountain from due east and west. You can see this wonder if you park at the Buena Vista (Pretty View) Lookout and walk south to the Corona del Loma (Crown Hill) Trail.

Why not, on your next hike, venture out to the Ahwatukee side and see what we have been working on. These 247 acres of State Trust land, known as the 620 were purchased in April 2009. We added 165 acres to the preserves with two new trails for you to explore; the Pyramid and the Bursera. The first was named after the shape of the mountain. Some locales call it the Gila View trail since most of the trail you have a view of the Gila Indian Community. Named for the rare Elephant Tree found in SMP, Bursera Trail pays homage to this Torchwood family member, whose relatives produce the aromatic frankincense and myrrh.



Dobbin's Lookout & Holbert Trail



# SouthScene



How fun to run into Google maps car documenting South Mountain Park. Talking to the guy responsible for taking pictures, it seems he just drives around neighborhoods in various cities and takes pictures marked on a grid he has. As of right now they do not have the proper authority to come into the interior of the park to take pictures, but how cool to have *Street View* pictures all the way up the Summit Road. Pop onto Goggle maps and see if you can see the snap of the entrance of SMP he took Sunday!

The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Phoenix Summit Challenge is just around the corner. Held on November 4 – 6<sup>th</sup> this event invites outdoor enthusiasts of all abilities to climb multiple summits in the City of Phoenix. Registration starts August 6, 2011 at 10:30 am and the spots fill fast! Whether you choose to climb all 7 summits in one day or two, participate in the 4 summit option, or in the all access challenge this is one fun weekend! We celebrate on the 6<sup>th</sup> with a dinner held at the Phoenix Zoo, band, Zoo Lights, and a raffle full of amazing prizes. Visit <http://www.phoenix.gov/recreation/rec/parks/preserves/specials/summit/index.html> and learn how you can be a part of it all!



## Road Closures

It is hard telling folks that they can not drive up to the top of the mountain to see the sunset, especially when their car is full of out of town visitors. To make sure this doesn't happen to you, before you load up the car first stop by

<http://phoenix.gov/recreation/rec/parks/preserves/locations/south/index.html>

and check out our web page updated with the latest information on hours, road closures, and special events happening in the park!



A BIG thank you to Frank Zullo for his article and pictures of Goat Hill, Holbert Trail, and the rock etchings. If you have a story you would like to share, drop me a line, I'd love to hear it! [elizabeth.smith@phoenix.gov](mailto:elizabeth.smith@phoenix.gov)

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# EastScene

## Hot Stuff

The intense heat creates the mirage of water in the distance while the air conditioning blasting from the vehicle cools enough to forget ones thirst. Outside of the ice box environment, the temperature is nearing 115 degrees. The intensity of the Arizona sun is felt briefly when briskly walking from covered parking to misty cooled mall. Such is the summer scene for many Phoenicians as they try to sidestep the heat that prevails across the state. Among the masses taking refuge from high temperatures are the few who embrace the scorching summer dog days for some hot hiking. Hiking in Phoenix's desert mountain parks during the summer months is an entirely different experience. Crowds are non-existence and finding a parking spot at the normally over-crowded trailhead is not a concern. For those unaccustomed to walking the trails during the blazing heat of the summer, a few points need to be considered. If you are used to making record times on the trail or feel you must finish what you started, remember this is not your same winter hike. Keep in mind the heat will slow you down, WAY down. Here is your chance to take it slow and notice all those natural wonders along the trail.

The desert has a more tranquil and reflective feel as you traverse the trails. Fewer birds and mammals are out and about, however the buzzing sound of the desert cicada distracts your mind from the heat. Getting to share the shade of a tree with a rock squirrel or whiptail lizard gives the desert hike a more intimate feel and perhaps lends one a realization of how flora and fauna adapt to endure their environment.

Hiking under the Arizona sun warrants your own adaptation to the heat in order to enjoy your experience. While wearing less clothing is initially appealing and can rid you of strange tan lines, a light long sleeve shirt, a wide brimmed hat, and shorts/pants is the more appropriate attire. A healthy dose of sunscreen still allows sun worshippers some color (pale is the new tan ☺) and diminishes your risk of skin cancer as well as pesky age spots. Unless you are blessed with the desert tortoise's ability to store water or the black throated sparrow's knack for survival on moisture consumed from seeds, drinking a water based beverage is the key to your survival. Exhausting your water supply can quickly turn into an emergency. Use common sense – hydrate, hydrate before you even set out on your hike, drink more during your wanderings, and again knock back even more after your hike is through (mind you beer is NOT the new water and is actually dehydrating). So get out there, slow down, drink up, be a quitter, and don't become a statistic of heat related rescues. (110 is the new 109 ☺)

~Sean Peters



Temperature (°F)

	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	100	102	104	106	108	110
40	80	81	83	85	88	91	94	97	101	105	109	114	119	124	130	136
45	80	82	84	87	89	93	96	100	104	109	114	119	124	130	137	
50	81	83	85	88	91	95	99	103	108	113	118	124	131	137		
55	81	84	86	89	93	97	101	106	112	117	124	130	137			
60	82	84	88	91	95	100	105	110	116	123	129	137				
65	82	85	89	93	98	103	108	114	121	126	130					
70	83	86	90	95	100	105	112	119	126	134						
75	84	88	92	97	103	109	116	124	132							
80	84	89	94	100	106	113	121	129								
85	85	90	96	102	110	117	126	135								
90	86	91	98	105	113	122	131									
95	86	93	100	108	117	127										
100	87	95	103	112	121	132										

Likelihood of Heat Disorders with Prolonged Exposure or Strenuous Activity

Caution
  Extreme Caution
  Danger
  Extreme Danger

### Hot Weather Hike Suggestions

Kiwanis, Mormon, and Desert Classic trails, all found at South Mountain Park, can be hiked around 6PM when the sun is low enough that the majority of your hike will be in the shade. Do bring a head lamp or flashlight in case your hike goes longer than expected. Early morning hikes along the Bajada or Bursera trails will also find you in the shade. Rangers recommend hiking prior to 10 AM & after 6PM before the temperature gets too hot. Always bring more water than you think you will need!

# NatureBytes

## *Mysterious Rock Markings* - By Frank Zullo

Whenever I hike in South Mountain Park, I am always on the lookout for prehistoric Hohokam rock art. Sometime however, I like to focus on the "art of rocks" instead. With such a variety of shapes, colors and interesting detail, rocks often prove to be incredible photo subjects. On one such hike I captured an intriguing image that looks like some ancient map of the Mediterranean, complete with the boot of Italy and the African coastline. Where the water would be, this map of stone showed a grooved pattern that could pass for a stylized version of sea floor terrain.

I soon realized the cross-hatch grooves reminded me of a petroglyph commonly made by the Desert Archaic people. If this was scratched out by some prehistoric glyph maker, it would have to be several thousand years old. That's how long it would take for the etched surface to build up a full coat of reddish brown desert varnish again. That fits easily, since the Archaic culture dates back some 8,000 years in the Southwest. It was more likely, however, these grooves were a product of natural weathering, yet I was still puzzled as to how the cross-hatch pattern could occur. So I contacted Peter Kresan, a retired University of Arizona geosciences instructor, to see what he thought. Kresan concurred with the idea of weathering as a probable cause and told me about various types. The one I thought fit best was a chemical variety caused by rainwater of a slightly acidic nature due to dissolved carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. This water can pool in tiny fractures causing them to enlarge over time, which in turn leads to increased water contact and accelerated weathering of the original crack. Identifying a



plausible natural process was helpful but not conclusive in solving this mystery, so I returned to the site searching for more clues. I quickly found similar grooves that were more randomly placed lending more credence to their natural origin. Then I found what I was really looking for. Tucked away in an area of relatively recent exposure, I saw a small pattern of very fine fractures (pictured at left) with a distinct crisscross pattern. That convinced me the grooves in question could easily have occurred naturally. So instead of being signs of Archaic people from a few thousand years ago, they were Mother Nature's art millions of years in the making. To see this for yourself, park at Buena Vista Lookout and walk the road you drive in on back a short distance to pick up the National Trail heading west. After hiking up a slight rise, the trail levels out and soon you start catching views on your left of the Chinese Wall (pictured below).



This structure was formed by a lava flow extruding from a crack in the Earth's crust. The magma had a similar mineral makeup to granite, but because it cooled quickly when exposed to the outside air, it formed fine grained rhyolite instead. As you continue, the view of the Chinese Wall becomes more from the side. When you just lose sight of the wall, look ahead to where the National Trail makes a sharp bend to the left.



That's where the rock is (33°20.536' - 112°02.882' for those with GPS). The grooved weathering is on top towards the end where a barrel cactus grows. Total hike from parking lot is 0.26 miles one way. There is a cleared area just off the trail to access the view on top of the rock. Please be careful not to trample any desert vegetation.





