Construction of new trailhead facilities at Fraesfield Mountain and Granite Mountain in Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve is underway. Access into the preserve has been available via these sites since 2013, but the new facilities will provide necessary support amenities and a more complete experience for hikers, bicyclists, rock climbers and equestrians.

The trailheads are being built simultaneously – work began earlier this year when saguaro cacti and other native plants were relocated to accommodate parking and new buildings. Designs are similar but unique for each location, with structures and site plans crafted in concert with natural landforms and features. The layout of the trailheads maximized the use of previously disturbed areas.

The centerpiece at each site is a new trailhead building offering shaded gathering areas, restrooms and space for educational displays. Once completed in summer 2019, both facilities will operate sunrise to sunset, and will offer great jumping-off points for those seeking to explore these diverse and unique areas in the northern parts of the preserve.

These trailheads were first envisioned as part of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve Access Areas Report approved in 1999. Construction cost for both trailheads is approximately $6 million, paid through sales taxes dedicated to land acquisition and access area improvements.

Learn more about these projects at ScottsdaleAZ.gov, search “construction.” For general information about the preserve, including trail maps, search “preserve.”

An architect’s rendering of the Fraesfield Trailhead is pictured above.

WESTERN WEEK RETURNS IN FEBRUARY

Connect with Old Town Scottsdale’s western history, up-close and in person, through festivals, art and one-of-a-kind events. Be sure to catch the featured events listed below, and find even more at ScottsdaleWesternWeek.com.

Come say howdy!

Top TV and Film Westerns - 11 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 2
Arizona’s Official Western Film Historian Charlie LeSueur leads a conversation and shares his Top 10 list. Learn more at ScottsdaleMuseumWest.org

Gold Palette ArtWalk - 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 7
Enjoy Scottsdale Gallery Association’s famous ArtWalk with a western twist. Stroll through Old Town’s 100-plus galleries, enjoy live mariachi performances, a rope trick artist and western art demonstrations. As a nod to Scottsdale’s Wild West roots, this event features line-dancing lessons, country music and a special performance from “The Singing Cowboy.” For more information visit ScottsdaleGalleries.com.

Hashknife Pony Express - 11 a.m. Friday, Feb. 8
The oldest officially sanctioned Pony Express celebrates its 61st year with riders blazing their trail from the tiny town of Holbrook, Arizona. At high noon, welcome their arrival at Scottsdale’s Museum of the West as they conclude their 200-mile trek with more than 20,000 pieces of mail. The fun starts at 11 a.m. with family-friendly games, storytelling, crafts, face painting, food trucks, live entertainment and more. Learn more at ScottsdaleMuseumWest.org.

66th Annual Parada del Sol and Trail’s End Festival - 10 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 9
Scottsdale’s own hometown parade features colorful floats, mounted horse riders, horse-drawn carriages, marching bands, wagons and stagecoaches. The parade ends with a western-spirited festival featuring live music, Aztec and Folklorico dancers, the famous 1959 “Howdy Dudettes,” street entertainment, dancing, wine garden and a cowboy kids’ zone. Learn more at ParadadelSolParade-TrailsEnd.com.

Arizona Indian Festival - Saturday, Feb. 9 and Sunday, Feb. 10
Arizona tribes will share their culture at the Arizona Indian Festival on Scottsdale Civic Center Mall. The festival includes food, song, dance and crafts from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday. More info at ArizonaIndianTourism.org.
Helping the homeless in Scottsdale

Homelessness is a complex social problem that defies easy solutions. While there are many laws that potentially impact those who are experiencing homelessness, being homeless is not a crime, nor is panhandling.

But while giving a few dollars to someone on the street corner may feel good in the moment, these direct donations can actually prolong the problem for individuals. Most experts agree that the most effective way to help is to donate to (or volunteer with) the many social service agencies focused on addressing the larger root problems behind homelessness and panhandling.

Using a combination of money from Scottsdale Cares (the city’s voluntary utility bill donation program), federal grants, tribal gaming grants and the general fund, Scottsdale supports a wide variety of social service programs including many addressing homelessness. These agencies benefit from your direct support as well. Find resources, information and links to organizations at ScottsdaleAZ.gov, search “homeless.”

Understanding short-term and vacation rentals

In 2017, the Arizona State Legislature passed a law eliminating the ability for cities and towns to prohibit short term rental properties (offered for rent less than 30 days). With the growing popularity of these properties thanks to online marketplaces like Airbnb, VRBO and others, Scottsdale’s Neighborhood Advisory Commission is encouraging residents, rental property owners and homeowners associations to learn more.

Except in neighborhoods where HOAs restrict or regulate them, vacation or short-term rentals are allowed by right in all residential neighborhoods in Scottsdale, within these rules: an entire property must be offered for rent (bedrooms or accessory buildings cannot be rented separately); the maximum family size is six adults (plus children); and non-residential uses (like events) are not allowed.

Property owners of vacation or short-term rentals must obtain formal rental registration with the Maricopa County Assessor and ensure tax liabilities are paid with the Arizona Department of Revenue.

Owners of rental properties should encourage their tenants to be good neighbors by doing simple things like parking only where allowed, using trash and recycling receptacles appropriately and being mindful of noise and other disruptions to those who live in the area all year long.

Additional information and resources are available at ScottsdaleAZ.gov, search “vacation rentals.”