Undergraduate Research Opportunity

Environmental Oral Histories

Prof. Mark Tebeau
History

Student will work with Professor Mark Tebeau and the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy to conduct oral histories into the history and development of the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy and the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. Student research will contribute to an ongoing project to document the region’s environmental history through studying the nation’s largest urban preserve and the activist community that led to its development. Oral histories will be archived by the Scottsdale Public Library so students will be exposed to the digital archiving techniques as well as the latest technological developing in collecting, processing, and representing oral histories. Stories will be curated to become part of the McDowell Sonoran Silver exhibition, presently on display at the Arizona Historical Society. Up to four students can work on this project.

Research assistant's duties:
The research assistant(s) will train in oral history methods and collection. They will conduct interviews (with subjects identified by key informants at the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy.) They will log the interviews, created library-ready metadata, and create audio clips for public presentations. Students will present their findings to the Pastfinders group of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. The project team will meet weekly (sometimes virtually via Google conference) to edit & review completed work, as well as execute a social media campaign.

Required skills or qualifications:
Students with good communication skills, interest in digital media, and ability to work independently and with ambiguous tasks.

Skills student will acquire:
Skills obtained include historical research, oral history methods and practice, and digital archiving techniques. Students will also become familiar with the broad field of cultural and land resource management, developing relationships with local librarians and community-based historians.