

PIMA COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS AND RECREATION VOLUNTEER NEWS

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NEWS FROM AGUA CALIENTE PARK

We are pleased to welcome new Ranch House Tour Guides: Hazelle Gonter, Pam Anderson, Dennis Winsten, and Sue Schroeder. All are training and beginning to work regular shifts at various times during Ranch House open hours. Thank you for volunteering to enrich the experience of our visitors at Agua Caliente Park!



Photo: Beth Kinsey

In preparation for our brand new Pollination Survey Field Study program, the gardens at Agua Caliente Park are getting a bit of a face lift. A variety of native plants have been added along the west side of the Ranch House and in front of the Rose Cottage in the hopes of attracting a myriad of native pollinators. The addition of these new colors, shapes and scents should invite a broader diversity of 6-legged visitors. We hope that the new plants will also bring joy to our 2-legged visitors. So, the next time you're out at the park, keep a lookout for some new splashes of yellow, purple, orange, white and pink... and while you're at it, don't forget to check out those wonderful, hard-working pollinators in action.

HERITAGE FAIR AT CANOA RANCH

The first annual Heritage Fair on March 7 at Canoa Ranch was a great success with almost 500 visitors in attendance. Vendors selling antiques, collectibles, and various arts and crafts participated in the event, along with local artists. Additionally, the San Xavier Coop Farm and farmers from Three Points were on hand to sell local produce. Thank you to the following volunteers for helping to make this event fun for all: Judy Burgard, Sharon Pomo, Milo Weingart, Hugh Bell, and John Attardi. Stay tuned for upcoming public events scheduled at Canoa Ranch.

HISTORY DAY AT CANOA RANCH

Historic Hacienda de la Canoa, or Canoa Ranch, came alive with Arizona history as 65 students, teachers, and parents participated in the first History Day at Canoa Ranch on March 12. Activities included learning about pre-historic archaeology, southwest pottery,

desert foods, ranching and roping, history of Canoa Ranch, and the time when southern Arizona was part of the Spanish empire or Mexico. As always, these events are made possible by the assistance of volunteers. Many thanks to Ellie Kurtz, Sandra Stone, Susan Knoll, Jim Knoll, and Hazelle Gonter for facilitating the fun and learning.



Photo: Susan Knoll

BUFFELGRASS NEWS

Tri-National Symposium – 2015

Southern Arizona Buffelgrass Coordination Center (SABCC) is thrilled to announce that we have been awarded funding to organize a tri-national, bi-lingual symposium on buffelgrass in Hermosillo, Mexico. This proposal was the work of many partners who contributed different sets of skills and expertise. The project

is called “A Tri-National Approach to Sonoran Desert Conservation – Finding Common Ground” and is funded through the Southwest Border Resource Protection Program (SWBRPP) of the National Park Service (NPS). SWBRPP provides financial and technical assistance to parks and partners along the U.S. Mexican border to mitigate impacts on cultural and natural resources and to further collaboration between Mexican and American land managers and their partners. NPS sites that will benefit from the project are Saguaro National Park, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, and Big Bend National Park. The three nations are the United States (Texas and Arizona), The Tohono O’odham Nation, and Mexico (Sonora and Chihuahua).

This project targets the issue of buffelgrass and its differential impact to the economies along the border. Invasive weeds, especially buffelgrass/zacate buffel (*Pennisetum ciliare syn. Cenchrus ciliaris*), have become a sensitive issue when it comes to cross-border cooperation and coordination. Buffelgrass is considered an invasive weed and a detriment to the natural ecosystem in the Sonoran and Chihuahuan Desert which are home to many National Parks, Preserves and other parks and conservation land. Buffelgrass has been listed as a noxious weed in Arizona. However, in some parts of the U.S. and Mexico, buffelgrass is valued as cattle and wild ungulate forage. It has been promoted by government agencies on both sides of the border for its ability to boost livestock production by increasing rangeland productivity and extending the growing season, reducing ranchers’ dependence on supplemental feed. These benefits are dependent on environmental and economic context, but ranchers have few science-based information resources to help them evaluate the risks and benefits of cultivating buffelgrass. This difference in stance on buffelgrass has led to a divide in cooperation and collaboration in research and general understanding of buffelgrass. To learn more and read the entire article, go to the buffelgrass.org website.

CAN WE BUG YOU?

After all the indoor presentations about arthropods, you finally have a chance to see what it is all about in person. This is our call for volunteers to observe our programs and help to the level you feel comfortable. You don’t need to know the names of the arthropods to start experiencing them. Just as with birding, expertise will come with experience. Contact Axhel Muñoz at 520-615-7855 ext. 2 or axhel.munoz@pima.gov if you would like to help with any of these events.

Living River Celebration – Exploring Aquatic Life

Date: Saturday, April 4

Time: 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Where: Wheeler Taft Abbott Sr. Branch Library, 7800 N. Schisler Drive

Outdoor Family Days: Night Bugs of the Sonoran Desert

Date: Saturday, April 11

Time: 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Where: Tucson Mountain Park, Pima County Desert Discovery Center, 7798 W. Gates Pass Road

Outdoor Family Day: The Pollination Story

Date: Saturday, April 25

Time: 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

Where: Tucson Mountain Park, Pima County Desert Discovery Center, 7798 W. Gates Pass Road

Dragons and Damsels of Agua Caliente Park

Date: Tuesday, April 28

Time: 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Where: Agua Caliente Park, 12325 E. Roger Road



*Blue Eyed Darter
Photo: Doris Evans*

**Interested in Volunteering? Email us at eeducation@pima.gov
Call us at Environmental Education Office 520-615-7855**

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