

PIMA COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS AND RECREATION VOLUNTEER NEWS

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APRIL 2016

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION EVENT

All current volunteers are invited to attend a special Volunteer Appreciation Event on Thursday, April 21 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Brandi Fenton Memorial Park Visitor Center. A delicious catered meal by Tucson Tamale Company will be provided. We hope you will all attend so that we may extend our gratitude and appreciation for all that you do in support of Pima County's education and interpretive programs. Please let Meg know at meg.quinn@pima.gov if you are able to attend. See you there!



each Thursday. What is there to do and see? The saguaro cactus always seems to be the main character, but along the way we sniff creosote bush leaves, discuss rainfall, note the multitude of small plants under an ironwood tree, and feel the coolness in its shade. We stop at a barrel cactus and elicit a chuckle when we talk about John Wayne using it for a water supply as we impart the real story. Packrat nests, holes in the ground, nibbles on cactus, and bird sightings give us the opportunity to talk about animal life. Native American uses of plants are of interest, too.

AGUA CALIENTE PARK BIRDING

Spring has sprung at Agua Caliente Park! We have recently seen our first Northern Beardless-Tyrannulets, Bell's Vireos, and Lucy's Warblers of 2016. At the same time, the number of ducks and Phainopeplas has dropped in another indication of the changing of the seasons. We would like to extend a big "Thank You" to all of our birding volunteers who help to make the Wake Up with the Birds program such a popular and enjoyable event. The Wake Up with the Birds walk is every Thursday, beginning at 8 a.m. in April. Come on out and join us!



PIMA COUNTY IS NOW ON FACEBOOK

For those of you who use social media, Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation is now on Facebook. Like us and you will get information on upcoming programs, see photos of recent events, and have an easy means to communicate with us. We will be updating the page frequently, so be sure to check us out.

GILBERT RAY NATURE WALKS

Pima County's Gilbert Ray Campground is nestled in Tucson Mountain Park on the west side of the Tucson Mountains. It's an attractive spot with spacious campsites and is a well-known destination for our northern visitors – especially Canadians. Throughout the months of January through early April, Pima County NRPR volunteers lead nature walks at the campground each Tuesday and on the nearby Brown Mountain Trail

Group sizes vary, but large or small, they are always an interested and interesting bunch. Most are seasoned campers/travelers and quite a few are "full-timers" so they already have a store of knowledge about things natural thus it is a two-way conversation. As we reveal the "secrets" of our desert, they add information they know about desert and related non-desert life. The questions are always thought-provoking, and our group members are keenly observant as we amble along, pointing out something that interests them, wanting to know about it. Upon returning to our starting point, we often get a round of applause and they tell us how thankful they are for Pima County's commitment to education. The tour leaders depart in good spirits at the end of the walk. We met some great folks, and leave with a pleasant sense of having done our part in helping them have a better understanding of our marvelous backyard. *Doris Evans*

CANOA RANCH WILDLIFE TRACKING CONTINUES

We now have five wildlife cameras on Canoa Ranch. Some of the older ones are beginning to show their age and have been replaced with newer models. On the west side of the Santa Cruz River we continue to record what we call "the usual suspects" – mule deer, javelina, coyotes, bobcats, raccoons, skunks, and rabbits. Most of the cameras have been in the same locations for over a year now so we've started to have a look on the east end of the river and the railroad track staying within the boundaries of the ranch. We now have moved two cameras to washes over there. *Malcolm McGregor*



CANOA RANCH VOLUNTEERS VISIT LAS LAGUNAS

Las Lagunas de Anza in Nogales was the second of three field trips arranged for volunteers at the Hacienda de la Canoa this spring. A gardener with her husband and Site Facility Volunteer joined with three Tour Guide Volunteers on a guided walk through the wetlands and pavilions. Even though there is a locked gate, the public can enter during daylight hours. Don Clemans,



a recognized volunteer of the restoration project described work involved in creating the trails (one named for him). The website gives a good pictorial essay of the site: <http://www.laslagunas.org/>

If you have a small group that wants a guided tour Don can be contacted at clemans4554@gmail.com to make arrangements. Las Lagunas is a Juan Bautista de Anza Trail passport site as designated by the National Park Service.

FIRST DESERT DISCOVERY DAY A SUCCESS!

On Saturday, March 12, Environmental Education staff and volunteers held an open house at the Desert Discovery Center in Tucson Mountain Park. We hosted the event to introduce visitors to a new location for public programs as well as instill them with a greater appreciation for the diversity of life in the Sonoran Desert. Visitors had an opportunity to taste desert foods, create cordage from plant fibers, sow seeds for their own desert food garden, travel through geologic time, take a guided nature walk, and meet several snakes and a Gila monster (courtesy of Ed Moll of the Tucson Herpetological Society). There were a lot of activities to choose from and we wouldn't have succeeded without help from our wonderful volunteers. Thank you, Liz Harrison and Liisa Reid! If you think this sounds like fun (it is) and would like to help out, we could use one or two more volunteers for our next Desert Discovery Day on Saturday, March 26 from 2 to 6 p.m. Contact Erin. Sol@pima.gov to sign up. Even if you can't help out we do encourage you to come by and check it out. The final event will be on Saturday, April 2 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Hope to see you out there! *Erin Sol*

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

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