

# PIMA COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS AND RECREATION VOLUNTEER NEWS

ISSUE NO. 58

FEBRUARY 2014

## WILDLIFE VIEWING AND LIVING WITH URBAN WILDLIFE

A big "thank you" to our Birding Volunteers. These programs are very popular and generate positive feedback. Keep up the great work!

In March, the Nature Nights owl and insect programs start again. If you would like to help, contact Jeff Babson at [jeffery.babson@pima.gov](mailto:jeffery.babson@pima.gov).

Pam Ryan delivered the newly-updated Living with Urban Wildlife PowerPoint presentation to 186 members of the Green Valley Gardeners. The organizers said it was one of the best presentations they have ever hosted. Great job Pam!

Thank you Pat Monahan, Amy Gaiennie, and Carol Brown for making the LWUW part of the third annual Beyond-Tucson Event a success.

In February, we will be bringing the LWUW presentation and trailer exhibit to Tucson Estates for residents of this large community west of the Tucson Mountains.

## GUIDED NATURE WALKS AT GILBERT RAY CAMPGROUND

We are proud of our Volunteer Naturalists who conduct nature walks twice weekly for campers at the Gilbert Ray Campground. The Volunteer Naturalists are trained on the natural history of our local desert and often guide visitors from Canada, Europe, the Northwest and Midwest U.S., and elsewhere. Participants are invariably enthusiastic about what they've learned and appreciative of the knowledge, skills, and friendliness of our volunteers.

Many thanks, to Volunteer Naturalists Allen Alderman, Betty Harris, Hazelle Gonter, John Scheuring, Liisa Reid, Ed and Linda Bartlett, Liz Peterson, and Pat Monahan. In addition, Gilbert Ray Campground Host/Volunteer Al Liebke is an amateur astronomer and conducts weekly "star parties" for campers as well. Thanks All!

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

### Nuts about Nature

Since October, Agua Caliente Park has been inviting preschoolers and their parents to become "Nuts about



Photo: Susan Knoll

Nature." Every first and third Wednesday of the month, 3-5 year olds come together to discover the wonders of the Sonoran Desert. Each program explores a different subject from saguaros to rainbows and camouflage to classification. Participants learn about the world around them while building their portfolio of school-ready skills. Whether eating like a bird, tracking elusive critters, or getting to the nitty-gritty of plant anatomy, tykes are diving into science through stories, activities, crafts, and experiments.



This program started with a mere four participants and has grown to include 49 children. Laura Cotter has lent her able and enthusiastic assistance for several programs but with numbers like these, it would be helpful to have an extra pair of hands (not to mention eyes and ears). If interested, please contact Julie at [julie.strom@pima.gov](mailto:julie.strom@pima.gov).

### Youth and Family

On February 8 we will have the Sonoran Desert Kids Club Duck Butts field trip to Sweetwater Wetlands to experience the fascinating lives of ducks and learn tips for identifying the many waterfowl that spend the winter in Tucson. We will have two programs at Agua Caliente Park for our Outdoor Family Days. On February 15 we'll use interactive props to explore the history of ranching in Southern Arizona and

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Call us at Environmental Education Office 520-615-7855**

on February 22 we will do a guided walk where we use binoculars to watch birds and learn about bird migrations. If you are interested in assisting kids and families on these programs contact Axhel Muñoz at 615-7855 x102 or email [axhel.munoz@pima.gov](mailto:axhel.munoz@pima.gov).

### **Astronomy with Al**

Pima County volunteer camp host and amateur astronomer Al Libke is gearing up for another season of offering star gazing opportunities to campers at the Gilbert Ray Campground. Last year, with the help of other volunteers, Al conducted astronomy programs for organized groups and individual campers at the campground, reaching over 200 campers. If you have a telescope and an interest in astronomy, Al could use some help. If interested contact Meg Quinn at [meg.quinn@pima.gov](mailto:meg.quinn@pima.gov).

## **CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR VOLUNTEERS**

### **Geologic History of the Tucson Mountains**

Date: Friday, February 7

Time: 9:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

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

Local geologist Bob Scarborough will give a presentation on the Geologic History of the Tucson Mountains at the Desert Discovery Center (DDC) on Friday, February 7 at 9:30 a.m. Following the lecture, we'll reconvene at the Brown Mountain Trailhead for a short geology walk on the lower trail. The walk will conclude at about 1:00 p.m.

The Desert Discovery Center is the former site of SASI (Sonoran Arthropods Studies Institute). To get there coming from Tucson take Gates Pass Road west over the pass and look for the markers at the paved pull-outs. The entrance is at pull-out G-10, on the right, before the T intersection at Kinney Road.



The long dirt driveway will take you back to the classroom/ office complex nestled against a desert hillside. Please let Meg know at [meg.quinn@pima.gov](mailto:meg.quinn@pima.gov) if you plan to attend.

### **Historic Hacienda de la Canoa**

There will be a business meeting for the Hacienda de la Canoa Volunteers in February at a date to be announced.

Robin Pinto gave an engaging presentation at the January continuing education program at Canoa Ranch. Here are some excerpts from the Arizona Humanities Council website describing Robin Pinto and her presentation Cattle and Grasslands: A History of Ranching in Southeastern Arizona. If you would like a copy of Robin Pinto's PowerPoint presentation please contact Sandy Reith at [sandy.reith@pima.gov](mailto:sandy.reith@pima.gov).

Robin Pinto is a landscape historian at the University of Arizona. She also works with the National Park Service and other agencies on studying the changing cultures and environment in Southeastern Arizona. She has written narrative histories on ranching, homestead settlement, national parks and monuments, and New Deal programs in Arizona during the Great Depression.

Robin's presentation discussed the history of ranching and explored the impact of environmental changes across Southeastern Arizona. Cattle-raising was first introduced into Arizona by Jesuit missionary Eusebio Kino in the late 1600s. The grasslands of Southeast Arizona were famous for their high-quality and abundance "stirrup-high on a horse," as the old-timers described them. In the 1800s cattle-raising was a challenging enterprise for any rancher who had to withstand raiding Apache, protect his investment in land and water, and survive Arizona's periodic droughts. Economic fluctuations, changing climate and federal laws, and restricted access to open space made survival of the ranching industry even more problematic during this century.

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