

PIMA COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS AND RECREATION

VOLUNTEER NEWS

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MARCH 2016

WILDFLOWER HIKE FOR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are invited to join Meg Quinn for an easy 1 to 2 mile spring wildflower hike in Catalina State Park on Friday, March 18 from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. This should be an excellent time of year for a good display of wildflowers. There is a \$7 entry fee per vehicle. If you would like to car pool, meet at the McDonalds on the NE corner of Magee and Oracle at 8:30 a.m. Otherwise, we'll gather at the trailhead parking lot in the park. Optional lunch afterwards at Macayos on Oracle north of Ina Road. Let Meg know at meg.quinn@pima.gov if you would like to attend, and if you are interested in carpooling. Thanks!



Photo: C. Allan Morgan

and predictions, exploring math and science concepts and laying a foundation for future learning. Participants play and learn while exploring a new nature-based theme through stories, games, crafts and adult-and-child activities every session. There is a \$5 per family fee to participate. For more information, e-mail eeducation@pima.gov or call 520-615-7855. To register for an upcoming program, visit www.pima.gov/nrpr and click on the orange register now button.

BEAT BACK BUFFELGRASS DAY RECAP

For the ninth annual Beat Back Buffelgrass Day on Saturday, January 23, over 600 volunteers worked at 25 different locations across Southern Arizona digging up this noxious weed. Tackling our massive buffelgrass infestation can be overwhelming and some say impossible, but efforts like this prove otherwise. Pima County NRPR and the Sonoran Desert Weedwackers co-hosted a removal site in Tucson Mountain Park. A group of 40 hardworking and dedicated volunteers contributed 160 hours and cleared two hillsides of buffelgrass. They not only eradicated an invasive grass that rapidly outcompetes native plants but also removed a major fire hazard from the area. A big thank you to all the volunteers who pitched in to protect our Sonoran Desert home!

NUTS ABOUT NATURE EXPANDS

Pima County NRPR's *Nuts About Nature Preschool Hour* is expanding its reach to midtown. Beginning in March, our preschool program will be held on the first and third Tuesday of the month at Brandi Fenton Memorial Park as well as the twice-monthly meetings at Agua Caliente Park. This preschool program marries nature topics with school readiness skills, by encouraging curiosity and exploration of the world around us while practicing social and motor skills, making observations



LIVING RIVER OF WORDS CELEBRATION

The Living River of Words celebration and awards ceremony will be Saturday April 16, at the Wheeler Taft Abbett Sr. Library from 9:00 a.m. to Noon, and we will need your help! There are many ways for you to get involved: delivering prizes, tending the refreshments table, leading craft activities, among others. Please let Yajaira know if you are willing to help with this educational and fun event, Yajaira.Gray@pima.gov or 615-7855x 7.

NEWS FROM CANOA RANCH

Judy Burgard, a volunteer tour guide for Historic Canoa Ranch, has put together a field trip schedule for all the volunteer groups at Canoa to enhance and further their knowledge of all things concerning Historic Hacienda de la Canoa. The activity is not County sponsored and is singlehandedly put together by Judy who arranges the carpools. She invites her fellow Volunteer Tour Guides,

the Volunteers at Green Valley Gardeners and the Site Restoration Volunteers. Below is the field trip schedule for this year:

Wednesday, February 24: 1:00 p.m.

Las Lagunas de Anza

966 W. Country Club Drive; Nogales, AZ

Wednesday, March 23: 10:00 a.m.

Tucson Rodeo Parade Museum (Tour 1.5 hrs. – Seniors \$8)

4823 S. 6th Avenue, Tucson, AZ

Pimeria Alta Museum in Nogales in April

SUCCESSFUL HISTORY DAY

I want to thank all volunteers for a very successful History Day. I received many favorable comments such as “top notch”, “engaging”, and “complementary to classroom curriculum”. Even the adults were learning AZ history. It takes all of us to pull off this event. 178 students, parents and teachers attended. You are the best. *Steve Russell*



INTERPRETIVE TIPS

For volunteer naturalists discussing Tohono O’odham culture, please consider the following advice from archeologist Linda Gregonis:

I never use the word “myth” to talk about I’itoi and Baboquivari. I usually say that Baboquivari is one of the homes of I’itoi, or Elder Brother, a Tohono O’odham deity (or even “supernatural helper”). I avoid using the word “god,” as I don’t think our concept of “god” translates to the supernatural beings in the O’odham pantheon. The word “myth” should be avoided. Using the word “story” might be better, but a better way to phrase it is “traditional O’odham believe that” and let the audience decide on myth, etc.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD WILDFLOWER YEAR?

Desert wildflowers in our region can occasionally produce a spectacular show. The colorful mass bloomers such as poppies, lupine and owl clover have specific requirements regarding temperature and rainfall and thus don’t always appear in great numbers. Winter-spring ephemeral wildflowers need a deep soaking rain in the fall (usually October or November) to trigger germination. Chemical inhibitors on the seeds will prevent germination unless the soil temperature and rainfall amounts are just right. If winter rains are then plentiful and well-spaced, spring flowering can be glorious and abundant, with carpets of blooms. It’s a rare phenomenon, occurring only once about every 7 to 10 years. Botanists were optimistic that we might have such an event in spring of 2016. Fall rains were good, and there was a probability of abundant moisture with an El Niño winter. But, alas, an extended mid-winter drought paired with record high temperatures has desiccated many tiny seedlings or prompted early, stunted flowers. However, all is not lost! We have many reliable perennial bloomers that deliver stunning floral displays each spring. These include cholla, prickly pear, hedgehog, ocotillo, palo verde, brittlebush, mallow, hibiscus, fairy duster and many others. In short, we may not have fields of poppies this year, but there will be plenty of flowers to admire and enjoy. *Meg Quinn*

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

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