

https://www.gvnews.com/news/parks-friends-and-county-ready-to-press-forward/article_7d3fdb8-0b09-11ea-a505-2371a99594a4.html

Parks friends and county ready to press forward

By Jorge Encinas jencinas@gvnews.com Nov 21, 2019



A view from the lake at the Historic Canoa Ranch. The Historic Ranch is one of three Parks in the area that the Friends of the Canoa Parks will be helping Pima County promote.

[Buy Now](#)

Jorge Encinas / Green Valley News

The Friends of the Canoa Parks is making headway as they prepare to hold their first official meeting next week.

The group was introduced by Pima County on Aug. 6, along with the name of Green Valley's newest park, Canoa Hills Trails — An Open Space Park. The golf course-turned-park is one of three parks the Friends will now be promoting.

Green Valley has three county parks: Canoa Hills Trails, Canoa Preserve and Historic Canoa Ranch.

Valerie Samoy said she finds it puzzling that more people in the area aren't aware of the parks. Samoy is a special staff assistant with the county's Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Department.

"I still run into people in Green Valley and the Sahuarita area who have no idea that there are parks down there," she said. "And one of them is a tourist attraction, the Historic Canoa Ranch."

Enter the Friends, who Samoy said can turn that around with more promotion of the three parks by people who live in the area and know them best.

Debbie Kenyon said the group's first meeting would help get out more definitive information and have a presentation from the county's Parks and Rec Department. Kenyon is the vice president at the Green Valley Council and organizer for the Friends.

The group is now at a stage where they are looking to the county to prioritize projects they can take their direction from, she said.

"That's all in the works," Samoy said. "We're developing that now, and that should come out after the holidays. We should have something in place to launch this Friends group, the parks and our partnership with them."

Samoy said the next couple of months are essential. When finalizing a new partnership, such as the one between Parks and Rec and the Friends, considerations for logistics, communication and structure are needed, Samoy said.

While the Friends work to assist the county with events, projects and fundraising, it may be their presence that has the most impact.

"What (the county) has actually asked us to be are ambassadors on foot," Kenyon said. "Those of who walk the park, we engage the public, we tell them about the Friends and the community's need to support these extraordinary resources."

And that isn't lost on Samoy, who said the Friends group is vital to the county and the Parks and Rec Department.

"It's exciting to be working with these people because we've never had a partnership like this," Samoy said. "And if you think about it, the three Canoa parks, they're part of a bigger picture for economic development for the area. Especially the Historic Canoa Ranch."

Jorge Encinas | 520-547-9732

If you go

What: Friends of Canoa Parks

When: Tuesday, Nov. 26, 1:30 p.m.

Where: GVR Las Campanas Social Center, Ocotillo Room.

Jorge Encinas

Reporter

Reporter Jorge Encinas was born and raised in Tucson. He graduated from the University of Arizona with master's in journalism in 2016.