

PIMA COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS AND RECREATION VOLUNTEER NEWS

ISSUE NO. 71

DECEMBER 2015

VOLUNTEER MEETING

Arizona Canines: Coyotes, and Mexican Wolves
Monday, December 7, 9:30 – 10:30 a.m.
Brandi Fenton Memorial Park Visitor Center,
3482 E. River Road

Coyotes and Mexican wolves are Arizona's largest canines and play important roles in our state's ecology. Arizona Game and Fish Department Watchable Wildlife Program Manager Randy Babb will give a presentation on the distinguishing features, habitats, feeding habits, and life history of these amazing canines. Please let Meg know at meg.quinn@pima.gov if you are able to attend.



Photo: Doris Evans

NEW SCHOOL PROGRAMS

After several planning workshops with local teachers the environmental education staff has developed two new and exciting school programs, Pollinator Survey and Wetland Wildlife. Each new program is designed to introduce basic environmental monitoring and biological survey skills. Students use a variety of scientific instruments to collect data and make observations. Data collected from each program are made available to the classes via a website that allows classes to access their data as well as data taken by other school groups participating in the same programs. Students are able to analyze data taken over a long period of time allowing them to determine trends and changes to the environment.

These challenging programs require more staff and volunteers than other programs we offer to school groups. Currently, volunteers Liz Harrison, Linda Howard, Jack Monahan, Nancy Blanchard, and Amy Gaiennie are providing much needed assistance with these programs. Any volunteer interested in getting trained to assist with these programs would be most welcome and should contact Steve at steve.russell@pima.gov.

VISIT TO BAR V RANCH

As a new addition to our public programs, 10 participants journeyed to the Pima County Bar V Ranch on the Old Sonoita Highway on November 5. NRPR Division Manager Kerry Baldwin met the group at the ranch headquarters and presented detailed information on the important biological resources of the Bar V Ranch as well as several other ranches that were acquired by Pima County through the voter-approved bond election in 2004. Kerry reviewed the Pima County Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan that was instituted in 1998-2000 with the input of a variety of stakeholders. This ever-changing plan provides guiding principles for land use planning in Pima County, and maps out areas with rich biological and/or cultural resources, or those that serve as important wildlife corridors. These areas are highlighted for conservation and protection. Other areas are designated as appropriate for development as the region inevitably becomes more populated. The 14,400 acre Bar V Ranch is considered a significant wildlife corridor in the Cienega Valley, and lies between the Rincon and Santa Rita Mountains. It's adjacent to the Cienega Creek Natural Preserve and includes a portion of Davidson Canyon, an important water source to Cienega Creek and the Tucson Valley. The Bar V is operated as a working ranch with limited grazing conducted on parts of the ranch. Water sources are maintained year-round for livestock and wildlife. A visit to this or another ranch is planned as a volunteer field trip for 2016.



CANOA RANCH NEWS

Canoa Ranch was featured in the Pima County pavilion at Tucson Meet Yourself in October. Volunteers Judy Burgard and Sharon Pomo handed out Canoa brochures to guests and invited visitors to tour the ranch. The 3rd Annual Anza Day at Canoa Ranch was held on October 25. We had 250 guests and a program which included the Living with Urban Wildlife trailer, Folklorico Dancers, historic presentations on Trade Beads and adobe brickmaking, Green Valley Gardeners,



Pima County Native Plant Nursery, and of course the Anza Trail Color Guard. Volunteers Milo Weingart, Hugh Bell, John Attardi, Mandy Vernalia, Bob Bertolini, Van Fowers, Ellie Kurtz, and Sandra Stone all

assisted with the event and shared ranch stories with visitors. On November 1, Canoa Ranch celebrated the 60th anniversary of the musical film *Oklahoma!* with a Sunday evening

sold-out concert. It was a wonderful evening of music with the all-volunteer Green Valley Concert Band. We have a new volunteer for special events down at the ranch – Mike Hellon. Mike was on hand for the concert and assisted in the parking of almost 100 cars! Volunteers Bob Bertolini, Sharon Pomo, Mandy Vernalia, and Ellie Kurtz also helped with a variety of tasks. Judy Burgard was chief usher for the concert and also manned the gift basket raffle that brought in \$277. It was a memorable evening and the Canoa Team is considering hosting a concert series at the ranch. The musical film *Oklahoma!* was also playing at the Desert Sky Theater on November 1 and 3. Volunteers greeted movie goers in the lobby, shared ranch stories, and extended invitations to the public to visit the ranch. Maureen Brooks and Judy Burgard had theater lobby duty on November 1. Sharon Pomo, Judy Burgard, Milo Weingart, and Mandy Vernalia had theater lobby duty on November 3. Many thanks to all the volunteers who assisted with these events!

VISIT THE RANCH HOUSE IN DECEMBER

If you have not seen the Agua Caliente Ranch House with holiday decorations, it's worth a special visit to see it in December. Our creative volunteers have decorated every room with a variety of rustic and modern holiday trimmings. Thanks to all the volunteers who contributed their time and talent, and special thanks to Jim and Susan Knoll and the Friends of Agua Caliente Park who donated new LED lights to enhance the tree this year.



GET THE WORD OUT

The online registration system for NRPR was launched in September. As expected there have been lots of questions about the registration process and program participation is down. In response to suggestions from users we added a membership feature. For a \$50 annual fee an individual may purchase a membership. An active member may enroll in outdoor activities for free or a reduced fee. Members still must register for each program in advance. Pre-registration is necessary for staff to properly prepare for the activity.

We need your help to promote NRPR programs and services. Visit www.pima.gov/nrpr to view and register for outdoor programs, tours, lectures, workshops, and classes. Next time you are at one of the parks or activities please pick up some Public Programs brochures to hand out to friends and park visitors.

VOLUNTEER NATURALIST REFRESHER TRAININGS

The Gilbert Ray Campground Volunteer Naturalists are encouraged to attend refresher trainings in December to prepare for the nature walks in 2016. The trainings have been



scheduled for December 8 and 16 at the campground, and December 10 and 17 at the Brown Mountain trailhead, from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. Any volunteers interested in training to be a Volunteer Naturalist at the Gilbert Ray Campground should contact Meg at meg.quinn@pima.gov. Volunteers must commit to leading a walk at least twice per month from January through mid-April.

CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOLUNTEERS

The EE staff offers a variety of programs to help volunteers fulfill continuing education, including volunteer meetings, interpretive hikes, and the following Agua Caliente Park Sunday lecture series presentations. Remember, there is no fee for volunteers to attend programs, but please let us know if you plan to attend by sending an email to eeducation@pima.gov.

December 6, 1:00 p.m. *Arizona Canines: Mexican Gray Wolves and Coyotes*

Join Arizona Game and Fish Biologists for a presentation on distinguishing features, habitats, feeding habits, and life history of these amazing canines.

December 20, 1:00 p.m. *The Life and Times of Walter Vail*
Van Fowers reenacts the life and travels of Walter Vail, from his birth in Nova Scotia in 1852 to his arrival in Tucson in 1876, and his purchase of the Empire Ranch.

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

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