

PIMA COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS AND RECREATION

VOLUNTEER NEWS

ISSUE NO. 65

FEBRUARY 2015

VOLUNTEER MEETING

Friday, February 27, 2015

9:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Brandi Fenton Memorial Park Visitor Center, 3482 E. River Road

Our next volunteer meeting will feature a talk on Amazing Arthropods by Axhel Munoz and Jeff Babson. They will discuss a variety of local inhabitants including spiders, scorpions, pseudo-scorpions as well as the evolutionary history of earlier diverse and successful groups. Insects are the result of the evolution of form and function in these groups and their history has been the key to their present success. Be sure to attend and learn more about these small but fascinating creatures!

NEW SCHOOL PROGRAMS

The Environmental Education group has been working feverishly creating curriculum in response to teacher input given as part of two Heritage Grant Funded teacher workshops we hosted last fall. We gleaned a lot of great information to help inform the direction of our new curriculum, so much so that we have decided to create two brand new programs. One program will focus on evaluating the ecological value of urban habitats and the other will focus on pollinators.

In the **Evaluating Urban Habitats Field Study**, students will collect biodiversity data at their schoolyard and



at an urban riparian area (Agua Caliente Park or Sweetwater Wetlands/Roger Road Ponds) then compare the ecological value of the two.

For the **Pollinator Survey Field Study**, students will be adding to, comparing, and analyzing pollination data being collected for an Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum database. Both of these programs will be piloted this spring and become fully integrated into our school program offerings next fall.

LIVING RIVER OF WORDS: YOUTH ARTS AND SCIENCE

Living River of Words (LROW): Youth Arts and Science, formerly known as Tucson's River of Words, introduces children to watersheds and wetland habitats through a multi-disciplinary series of science investigations, poetry, and visual arts. In 2014, EPA grant funding for the Living River Project allowed for student field trips

to the flowing portions of the lower Santa Cruz River. The lower Santa Cruz River in northwest Tucson and Marana flows year-round and provides a vital wetland

habitat. Water in this stretch of the river comes from two regional water reclamation facilities. Pima County recently completed its largest public works project to upgrade the quality of effluent released from these facilities. The Living River Project aims to track and communicate water quality and environmental improvements that result from these upgrades.

While at the river, students conduct water quality tests and survey wildlife and riparian vegetation. A visiting poet or artist guides the students with journaling,



photographing, and drawing in preparation for poetry writing, photo processing, and artwork back in the classroom, which they can then submit to the LROW Youth Poetry and Art contest.

During this LROW cycle (2014-2015), six schools participated in this program that include a field trip to the Lower Santa Cruz River: Amphitheater High School, Davis Bilingual Magnet School, DeGrazia Elementary, Satori Charter School, and Ochoa Community Magnet School. In addition over 400 students from five schools and two Pima County Community Centers, received a water related science class and are submitting entries to the LROW Poetry and Art Contest.

Mark your calendars for the LROW award ceremony and the Living River Celebration on Saturday, April 4, 2015 at Wheeler Taft Abbott Library in Marana. Stay tuned for details on this community event. If you would like to assist with the LROW entry processing, exhibit preparation, and/or award ceremony please contact Yajaira, 615-7855 x7 or Yajaira.Gray@pima.gov.

ARIZONA HISTORY AND WILDLIFE LECTURES

Our history and wildlife lecture series will be wrapping up soon, so don't miss the following February lectures.

Whiptail Ruin: Hunters and Migrants in Thirteenth-Century Tucson, by Archaeologist Linda Gregonis, Sunday, February 8, 1:00 p.m., Agua Caliente Park, 12325 E. Roger Road. Reservations required.

Archaeology of a Mexican Family, by Homer Thiel, Historical Archaeologist and Project Director for Desert Archaeology, Inc., Sunday, February 22, 1:00 p.m., Agua Caliente Park, 12325 E. Roger Road. Reservations required.

Borderland Felids (Jaguars and Ocelots), by Randy Babb, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Friday, February 27, 2:00 p.m., Joyner-Green Valley Branch Library, 601 N. La Canada Drive. Reservations not required, but space is limited.

INTERPRETIVE HIKES WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION TEAM

Hiking is an excellent way to get exercise, while exploring a Pima County Park or other scenic spot in the

Tucson area. Join us on one of the following interpretive hikes, led by our Environmental Education staff:

Cactus Hike: learn about our local cacti and their uses during a 3 mile hike, Wednesday, February 11, 9:00 – 11:30 a.m., Tucson Mountain Park, Sarasota Trailhead, 2700 S. Sarasota Boulevard. Reservations required.

Arizona Trail Hike: a 2-3 mile hike overlooking Cienega Creek Natural Preserve, Thursday, February 12, 9:00 a.m. – Noon, Gabe Zimmerman Davidson Canyon Trailhead at Cienega Creek Natural Preserve, 16000 E. Marsh Station Road. Reservations required.

Anza Trail Hike: discover the cultural and natural history of the Santa Cruz River Valley, during a 2-3 mile hike. Friday, February 27, 9:00 a.m. – Noon, Historic Hacienda de la Canoa, 5375 S. I-19 Frontage Road, Green Valley. Reservations required.

NEWS FROM AGUA CALIENTE PARK

It has been a good start to the year at Agua Caliente Park! The weekly Wake Up with the Birds walks continue to draw birders from around North America, along with excellent birds. Recent highlights include five species of duck, peregrine falcon, Western bluebird, and pine siskin. Thanks to all of our volunteer guides for helping make these walks enjoyable to so many. The Historical Tours also continue to do well, attracting many folks who wish to learn more about the park's past. The Ranch House is very popular at this time of year and 2015 has been no exception. Thanks to all for bringing the past to life at the park.

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

PIMA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Sharon Bronson, Chair • District 3

Ally Miller • District 1

Ramón Valadez • District 2

Ray Carroll • District 4

Richard Elías • District 5

PIMA COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

Chuck Huckelberry • County Administrator

John M. Bernal • Deputy County Administrator for Public Works

PIMA COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS AND RECREATION

Chris Cawein • Director



PIMA COUNTY

Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation

3500 West River Road • Tucson, AZ 85741

520-724-5000 • www.pima.gov/nrpr