

# WELLSPRING NEWS

## Summer 2016

Published by the Friends of Agua Caliente (FOAC), Inc.

Tucson, Arizona

### From the President:

Dear Friends of Agua Caliente,  
2016 is the fifth consecutive year that because the flow from the spring has been significantly reduced or even non-existent for extended periods, the Park has pumped groundwater to replace or supplement the spring flow to maintain water in the main pond. A proposal to refurbish the pond and conserve water in the system was included in the 2015 Pima County Bond Proposal, but was unfortunately not passed by voters. Despite the bond not passing, the need to preserve this precious natural resource is still a focus of Pima County Natural Resources Parks & Recreation (NRPR) and the Regional Flood Control District (RFCD).

The condition of the main pond remains to be resolved, but without the funds sought through the bond proposal, NRPR does not expect resolution for possibly three to five years. NRPR is however undertaking the first phase of a plan to reduce groundwater pumping at the park. This first phase is to renovate Pond 2, the pond just west of the main pond. Utilizing existing sources of funding, NRPR & RFCD plan to reduce the size of Pond 2, install a liner, and add enhanced landscaping and recreational areas.

The renovation includes a land bridge to the center island, a paved pathway around the pond and a variety of seating and wildlife

areas. Once completed, Pond 2 will be able to store water if a surplus becomes available within the system naturally or receive water from the present allocation of well water. This first step ensures that when resources are available to refurbish the main pond, Pond 2 will not only be available to accept water from the main pond, but will also provide the open water environment needed to sustain the diverse wildlife that relies on this habitat and that visitors have come to enjoy so much. In the end, the complete restoration of the pond system (including renovation of the main pond) is estimated to reduce groundwater usage by up to 70 percent.

Construction work to renovate Pond 2 should begin in June. During the renovation, which is expected to be completed by the end of August, access to the west end of the park will be restricted. Please comply with posted notices and respect barricades during this time. Should you be interested in learning more about the renovation, a memo and drawings from NRPR describing the changes are posted on our FOAC website (address listed at the bottom of pages 2 and 3 of the Newsletter). Thank you for your continued support.

Peggy Denny

### Supporting NRPR

The Friends of Agua Caliente will once again support many of Pima County NRPR Environmental Education and Park Programs. These programs include: Digital cameras for the *Pollinators & Wetlands Wildlife school program*, arts & crafts supplies for the *Nuts About Nature tots program*, supplies & fees for the *Earthkeepers school program*, teaching materials & instructor fees for *Living River of Words Youth Arts & Science program*, teaching supplies & volunteer lunches for *History Day*, and speaker fees for the Agua Caliente Park *Lecture Series*. We will also fund exhibit panels in the Ranch House Visitor Center and two additional interpretive sign frames. We plan to apply for a grant or solicit donations for a second Binocular Viewer.

**Thanks to our supporters for enabling FOAC to help with these important programs!**



Vermilion Flycatcher Chicks

Photo by Susan Knoll

## From the Bunkhouse: Nature and Birding Trail

## Join FOAC Board

A Nature and Birding Trail is in the initial design & approval process at Agua Caliente Park. If approved by Pima County and once appropriate funding is secured, it will be built in the northern portion of the Park (area just north of the brown Bunkhouse). The



Agua Caliente Park North

intent is to have a decomposed granite path winding through the trees for visitors to enjoy the birds, animals, and native plants. Benches and a few picnic tables will be available to sit and enjoy the serenity of the park. The loop will be accessible from the main paved path and Ramada (described next).

A covered Ramada is also planned in the open area north of the trees. Significant plant screening will help preserve the solitude of the Nature & Birding Trail when the Ramada is in use. The Ramada can be used for family gatherings and by Pima County Environmental Education Programs for school & adult visitors.

As the plans are finalized this fall, FOAC will begin a fundraising campaign to help offset the cost. The intent is to fund the Nature & Birding Trail with funds raised by FOAC supporters and augmented by Pima County or through a Grant or supporter Endowment. You can also support this project with the purchase of a bench or picnic table. This will likely be a 2-3 year phased project. Once the plan & costs are finalized, additional information will be posted on our Website, Facebook page & future newsletters.

*Jim Knoll*

**Would you like to help shape the future of Agua Caliente Park?** We would love to have you join us on the FOAC Board of Directors or help with any committees. We meet five times per year, normally the fourth Monday every other month and take the summer off. This is an opportunity to give back to the Tucson community in a very positive way.

For more information, contact us at: [INFO@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.org](mailto:INFO@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.org).



Main Pond, Agua Caliente Park

## Friends of Agua Caliente, Inc. Board of Directors Standing Committee Chairpersons annotated in ( ) below

Peggy Denny, **President**  
([Website](#))  
Maura Brackett, **Vice President**  
([Fundraising](#), [Nominations](#))  
Sylvia Olberding, **Secretary**  
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Vaughn Johnson  
Jim Knoll  
([Newsletter](#), [Website](#), [Membership](#))  
Joyce Roughton  
Sandy Sarah  
([Co-Founder](#))  
Linwood Smith

**Board Member email addresses are:**  
[FirstLast@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.Org](mailto:FirstLast@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.Org)

## Events @ Agua Caliente Park

Visit the Friends of Agua Caliente Website for a complete monthly list of events at Agua Caliente Park. Throughout the summer, Pima County NRPR will continue the “Wake up with the Birds” birdwalk, from 7:30 – 9 AM every Thursday. In the fall, as it starts to cool down, the timing will shift a little later. There will be many other family friendly events at Agua Caliente and other Pima County NRPR Parks. Visit [Pima.gov/NRPR](http://Pima.gov/NRPR) for a complete list and to register for any event.



Harris's Hawk

Photo by Susan Knoll

**Common Solitary Porcupine**

Generic name means “one who rises in anger”.

A Porcupine is a rodent. It is a herbivore, a strict vegetarian feeding on twigs, leaves, flowers, nuts, branches, and tree bark.

It has a large chunky body with high arching back and short legs. A black line runs up the middle of the tail and fans out on the lower back, with white on its head (yellowish in the West). Quills found on rump and tail. Has long curved claws.

Mates October – November. One young born May – June after about 7 months.

Habitat: Conifers & mixed forest. In the West, dry scrubby areas with trees. Ranges: Western U.S., south to Mexico. Most of eastern states and Canada.

Common Porcupines are not aggressive if left alone. If attack is imminent, it gives a warning

with tooth-chattering many times. It can produce a strong pungent odor causing eyes & nose to water. Remember, if you are stuck by quills, cut off the ends of the hollow quills releasing air pressure, allowing you to withdraw it easier. See a doctor.

Best medicine is to just stay away from them!

**Facebook**

FOAC is on Facebook. Follow us to stay abreast on late breaking and current events. To find FOAC, search “Friends of Agua Caliente Tucson” within Facebook, access us from our FOAC website, or scan the QR Code. We will post current events & pictures so please “like, comment, and share” to expand our following!



**Membership in the Friends of Agua Caliente**

**Join Friends of Agua Caliente**

The 2016 membership year is nearing completion and once again, I want to thank all our loyal supporters of *the Friends of Agua Caliente* and the Park! If you have not yet renewed, please consider supporting FOAC. Our ability to support NRPR with funding and items they cannot normally accomplish within their budget cycle is tremendous and we owe it to all of you. As of May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 we have a total of **227 supporters** (members and donors).

It is not too late to join FOAC or renew your support. We would love to have you on our team.

The Friends of Agua Caliente, Inc. is a 501 (c) (3) Non-Profit Corporation, therefore all donations are tax deductible. Membership is based on the

following schedule:

Individual	\$15
Family	\$25
Organization	\$50
Donation (any amount appreciated)	

Please send name, address, phone number, and email along with a check to: Friends of Agua Caliente, Inc., PO Box 32005, Tucson, AZ 85751-2005 or contact Jim Knoll at [info@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.Org](mailto:info@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.Org). Additional membership information is also on the FOAC website listed at the bottom of the newsletter.

Your dedication to the Park and FOAC is greatly appreciated. We can’t do what we do without great members and donors!

*Jim Knoll*

Sending the newsletter to our members & supporters electronically saves FOAC postage and you receive it in color. If you did not receive an electronic version and would like to, please send an email to [info@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.Org](mailto:info@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.Org). We do not release our database to anyone.



Photo by Susan Knoll

Western Screech-Owl  
Agua Caliente Park

**NRPR Online Registration**

Pima County NRPR now has an online system for program registration and Ramada reservations. Along with the new process there is a **nominal fee** to attend many of the activities. In response to feedback, we also initiated an **annual membership pass**. Once you create a profile, you may purchase a **\$50 annual membership**, which allows you to attend activities free of charge or at a reduced cost. This is great for recurring events such as Bird Walks or the Sunday Lecture series and will provide significant savings. You can also select an event and pay only for it.

This represents a major change. The website to register is: [www.pima.gov/nrpr](http://www.pima.gov/nrpr). For questions or comments, please contact me at 520-615-7855, ext. 0 or [Wendy.Burroughs@pima.gov](mailto:Wendy.Burroughs@pima.gov).

*Wendy Burroughs  
Pima County NRPR*

## Friends of Agua Caliente, Inc.

P.O. Box 32005

Tucson, AZ 85751 - 2005

### Tucson Audubon at Agua Caliente Park

The Tucson Audubon Nature Shop inside the Ranch House at Agua Caliente Park is a great place for birding essential items, books, optics, and natural history items. The shop has a great selection of children's books and games. Next time you need the perfect gift, come check out our selection of jewelry, t-shirts, purses, and more! Nature Shop volunteers provide a wealth of information to park visitors. Available in the shop is our new Tucson Birding Trail map, which covers 45 birding sites in the greater Tucson area. This is a great source for detailed information that will help in planning bird watching adventures throughout the greater Tucson area.

In August, join the fun at the [Southeast Birding Festival, August 11-14, 2016](#). Experience Southeast Arizona birding at its best! Guest speakers this year will be Jeff Gordon, President of

the American Birding Associations, and Sheri Williamson, hummingbird expert and founder of the Southern Arizona Bird Observatory. Proceeds from the Nature Shop and the Festival support Tucson Audubon's work to protect birds and the places they live. For more information, visit [tucsonaudubon.org](http://tucsonaudubon.org).

For the summer (June – September), the shop is open Thursdays from 9 am to 1:30 pm. In October, the shop will return to its Thursday – Saturday schedule.

Join the weekly Pima County NRPR Wake Up with the Birds Bird Walk on Thursday mornings and shop afterward for a 10 percent discount on all items. Bird Walk hours are listed on the FOAC website current events page. We look forward to your next visit.

*Liz Harrison  
Nature Shop Volunteer*

### Website

FOAC website can be accessed by scanning the QR code here. The web address is also located on the bottom of page 2 & 3 of the newsletter.

The website has the key history of FOAC & Agua Caliente Park, current significant issues affecting the Park, and current events for the month. You can also send an email to any board member and find links to other related websites.



### Postcards

FOAC sells Agua Caliente Postcards at the Audubon Shop in the Ranch House. This is a great way to take home memorable pictures of the Park. We appreciate your support of *the Friends of Agua Caliente*.

