

WELLSPRING NEWS

Summer 2014

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

Tucson, Arizona

From the President: Our Distressed Pond and the Way Forward

Dear Friends,

There is no doubt that summer has arrived in Tucson, with temperatures soaring into the 100s. For the sake of Tucson and Agua Caliente Park, I hope we have a great monsoon.



Main Pond – March 2014



Main Pond – March 2007

As I'm sure you are aware, the ponds at Agua Caliente Park continue to be distressed. The stream is still not flowing and, although Pima County is pumping well water to augment the main pond, it is insufficient to maintain the main pond. In our current environment, the only way to save the main pond is to completely redesign it to be more efficient.

Pima County Natural Resources Parks & Recreation (NRPR) has developed a proposal to redesign the main pond to make it sustainable in our current environment. The redesign will include lining the pond, reducing overall size from ~3.5 acres to ~2 acres to reduce the water requirement, re-contour the bottom to accommodate waterfowl, fish, wildlife, and reinforce the shoreline to minimize erosion. The redesign should reduce the water requirement by 70 percent.

Photos by Susan Knoll



The Friends of Agua Caliente wrote a letter of support to the Pima County Bond Advisory Commission outlining the numerous reasons immediate action is necessary, highlighting that the Park is a community treasure listed on the National Register of Historic Places, a worldwide birding destination, and used by school children throughout the region for environmental education. That letter is posted on our website. Mr. Kerry Baldwin (Pima County Natural Resources) presented the proposal to the Committee on May 2nd and the Friends of Agua Caliente reiterated our support during the community input phase.

There will likely be more proposals than will be allowed for a Bond Election. From the input received this Spring, the Committee will rack & stack the projects and provide a recommended slate to the Board of Supervisors for approval or tweaking. That process will likely happen over the summer and into the Fall. The Board of Supervisors will determine the final slate of projects and decide whether to recommend a Bond Election in 2015.

The Friends of Agua Caliente firmly supports the restoration of the pond infrastructure and believes it is the only way to sustain it into the future. For more information, go to www.pima.gov/bonds. Once there, select Parks and Recreation to see the list. Agua Caliente Park Pond Restoration project and the Pima County presentation to the Bond Committee is listed there. We hope you will support this worthwhile endeavor as well. Thank you!!

Jim Knoll



Main Pond – May 2005

From the Bunkhouse: Living on a Working Ranch

Living on a working ranch, there was much to do every day. Of course, I loved it because I was living the life of a cowboy. There were horses and cattle to feed, stalls to be cleaned, and cows to be herded. It was a great life. I enjoyed going out at night, walking down to one of the lower lakes and just sitting on the bank and listening to all the sounds of nature. We had abundant wildlife of all types that came to drink out of the lakes. There was really no danger, but I did carry a rifle in case I came across a rattlesnake...which did happen from time to time.

As we were far from Tucson at the time, the skies were dark and you could see a sky full of stars without any interference from the city lights. The family would often sit around the swimming pool with the lights off, search for different star constellations, and watch for shooting stars. We would talk about what needed to be done the next day and what was going on with everyone. It was very relaxing.

We always looked forward to

the summer monsoon. It would usually rain in late afternoon and by early evening the skies would clear up and the humidity would drop, making it very pleasant to sit outside. Of course, we did not have a TV yet, so we just enjoyed talking or reading. If we had heavy rains, we could hear the Agua Caliente Creek rumbling up in Agua Caliente Canyon an hour or so before we saw any water in the creek. We would drive down to the road to see the water come gushing across it. After a rain, when the Agua Caliente was still running, we would often hear a knock on our door. It would be someone who tried to cross the wash and got stuck. We would get our tractor and drive down to the wash. If they were not too far in and the water not too deep, we would hook the chain to the frame and then pull the car out of the wash. Most people were very grateful. Once we pulled out a man who had a brand new Jeep Pickup with 4-wheel drive. We went back to the house. The next morning all you could see was the roof of his pickup. I guess he

thought since he had a 4-wheel drive, he could get across that wash. Of course, the fact that he had been drinking was probably a factor. He had to get a county road grater to pull his truck out. I'm sure it cost him a pretty penny to fix.

The Tanque Verde area was small and friendly. I still have a few friends that I grew up with that still live in the area.

I really enjoyed my years there and was very sad when my parents sold the Ranch. They were not in good health and since all the kids moved away, the Ranch was just too much work for them.

Pete Filiatrault

The Ghost of Agua Caliente



Photo by Susan Knoll

Agua Caliente Bunkhouse

Friends of Agua Caliente, Inc. Board of Directors

Standing Committee Chairpersons annotated in () below

Jim Knoll, **President**

([Newsletter](#), [Website](#), [Membership](#))

Maura Brackett, **Vice President**

([Fundraising](#), [Nominations](#))

Sylvia Olberding, **Secretary**

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Peggy Denny, **Treasurer**

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Vaughn Johnson

Lynda Nash

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Sandy Sarah

([Co-Founder](#))

Linwood Smith

Board Member email addresses are:

FirstLast@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.Org

Electronic Newsletter

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 FOAC@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.Org to be placed on the electronic distribution (we do not release our database to anyone).

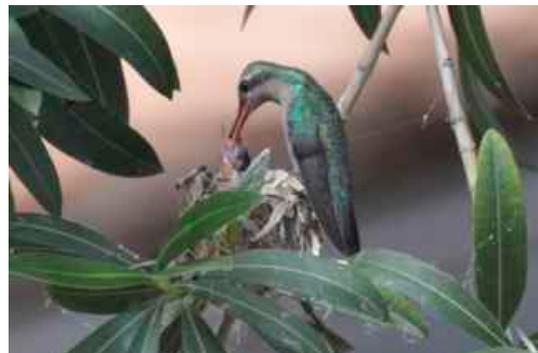


Photo by Susan Knoll

Broad-billed Hummingbird Feeding Chick

Nature Corner by Judy Gray (Naturalist / FOAC Board Member)

Western Diamondback Rattlesnake 34" – 84" Long Largest Rattler in the West!

Rattlesnakes make resting forms by pushing debris out with heavy bodies. Forms are found in open washes, on trails, base of vegetation, and trees. Habitat – brushy desert, rocky canyons, bluffs along rivers, & rocky foothills, and Sonoran Desert found above ground during the warmer months of the year. Most active during cooler hours of morning and evening and emerging at night.

Rattlesnakes are “sit & wait” hunters, sitting on rocks, near water holes, or shallow streams waiting for birds to drink. They hide near packrat houses & rodent burrows.

Breeding late March – May into the Fall. They have 4 – 25 young. Females mature in 3

years.

Rattlesnake vision is short, about 10 feet. They have a heat-sensing pit on either side of the face to detect change in temperature up to a foot away. They also have a forked tongue to smell.

It is a fallacy that rattlesnakes must coil to strike – they bite from any position. It lifts its head well above its coils sounding a buzzing warning. TAKE HEED!!

Gila Monster 18" – 24" Long

It is easily recognized by its bright black and pink beaded skin, blunt tail and black face. Breeds throughout summer with 3 – 5 eggs laid in the Fall – Winter. Gila Monsters dig their own burrows, borrow the dens of a snake, or share with a tortoise inside.

This venomous lizard inhabits the mountain foothills, Palo Verde – Saguaro Forest, canyons, washes, and arroyos. They prefer rocky areas with boulders and plenty of places to hide.

They spend more than 90 percent of their lives resting in underground burrows. With milder temperatures in March – May, they are active in early morning and evening. Gila's move slowly and eat newborn mice, ground squirrels, Harris squirrels, baby rabbits, and bird & reptile eggs. They can eat 35% of their body weight and store excess in their tail.

The lizard can bite quickly, hanging on with powerful jaws. Repeating bites ensure venom flowing into the wound, affecting the prey's blood pressure. It chews on its victim. They bite in self-defense. When provoked, they gape its mouth and hisses. It backs up trying to retreat, but will bite with impressive speed. Never handle or pick one up!

Membership in the Friends of Agua Caliente

Join Friends of Agua Caliente

We have almost finished another membership year 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 all to you. Our membership and donor year is October through the following September. As of June 1st, 2014 we have a total of 207 supporters (members and donors). Your generosity has raised over \$9,000.

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

Board of Directors if you would like to help shape the future of Agua Caliente Park.

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 FOAC@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 hope you will choose to become involved in *the Friends of Agua Caliente* and Agua Caliente Park. If there is anything we can do, let us know. We can't do what we do without great members and donors!

Jim Knoll



Elf Owl in Saguaro
Agua Caliente Park

Friends of Agua Caliente, Inc.

P.O. Box 32005

Tucson, AZ 85751 - 2005

Tucson Audubon at Agua Caliente Park

Tucson Audubon Society invites you to explore and enjoy the beautiful and fascinating Sonoran Desert and Sky Islands during the 2014 Tucson Bird & Wildlife Festival August 13 – 17! Get to know our friendly, local birding and conservation community, and join a dazzling array of watchable wildlife experiences.

The Festival offers many exciting activities! Especially intriguing may be the suite of workshops at the event, or as festival keynoter, international bird tour leader and author, Steve N. G. Howell says, “funshops”. The “funshops” offered by Howell offer a unique perspective on how to use a field guide and the story behind seasonal molt. Intermediate birders can brush up on the Flycatcher skills in a workshop taught by Homer Hansen. If you are interested in birds, but would not yet call yourself a “birder”,

try the “Beginning Birding” workshop with expert Lynn Hassler – it’s sure to give you the birding ‘bug’! Additional workshops will teach you how to view bats, identify hummingbirds, and attract more birds and wildlife to your yard.

At the Festival, you are invited to compete in the Sky Island Birding Cup or hit the trails with our friendly expert leaders, who will help you track down your most wanted birds. Visit the Nature Expo where you’ll find festival fun for the whole family! Learn new skills in workshops and expand your horizons over dinner presentations. Make monsoon memories in Tucson this August 13 – 17, 2014.

Please visit our website at www.tucsonaudubon.org or call (520) 209-1811 for more info or other exciting events.

*Julie Pulliam
Event & Volunteer Coordinator*

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.



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.



Postcards

FOAC sells Agua Caliente Postcards at the Audubon Shop in the Ranch



House. We appreciate your support of *the Friends of Agua Caliente*.