

# WELLSPRING NEWS

## Summer 2019

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

Tucson, Arizona

### From the President

Dear Friends of Agua Caliente,

Thank you for being part of the Friends of Agua Caliente (*FOAC*) team, a non-profit organization dependent on membership and donations. Your support makes it possible for *FOAC* to be a strong supporter of Agua Caliente Park, part of Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation (*NRPR*) team.



South end of Pond 1 looking north

Restoration of Pond 1 will bring a new era to our “Desert Oasis”. The restoration will be documented and a video attached to the *FOAC* website under the *Gallery Video* section. In this way, *FOAC* ensures the membership will have access to a historical record of change at the Park. Progress on this restoration will continue throughout the summer with updates posted on the *FOAC* website and the *NRPR* website at: <http://www.pima.gov/aguacaliente>. Addi-

tional details are outlined on page 2 of the newsletter.

There will also be changes to the *FOAC* Board Officers for 2020. Officers can serve a maximum of two three-year terms and a Nominations Committee has been established per the Bylaws. The Board of Directors goal continues to ensure a high confidence from our membership in our 15-member Board (currently all 15 board positions are filled). The Officers will assume their responsibility in January. Nominations are open.

*FOAC* has a collaborative process for developing an Annual Work Plan with Pima County *NRPR* under which both agree to undertake certain projects and programs. The budget year for Fiscal Year 2020 covers October 1, 2019—September 30, 2020. This supports *NRPR* with \$23,722.40 (Nature and Birding Trail [\$12,600], Pond 1 support for a bridge or amenities on the island [\$6,372.40] previously raised and held in a restricted fund account, and education expenses [\$4,750] for the speaker series, school programs, and Living River of Words). Additionally, operating ex-



penses for *FOAC* include \$4,750 (membership, newsletter, pond 1 video, and social media). These activities are only possible through your very generous support to Agua Caliente Park and *FOAC*. If you would like a copy of **the Treasurer’s Report or annual budget**, please email [treasurer\[at\]friendsofaguacaliente\[dot\]org](mailto:treasurer[at]friendsofaguacaliente[dot]org).

2019 has been an exciting year at the Park in anticipation of the Pond 1 restoration. Thanks to your support, *FOAC* was able to support Pima County *NRPR* this past year including the Speaker Series, school education, and the Living River of Words.

Finally, the *FOAC* Website has been transformed into a new format with new and exciting topics and pictures. See the website section on page 3 for the new categories and topics. The website is listed on the bottom of pages 2 & 3 of the newsletter.

Once again, thank you for your confidence and support of the Friends of Agua Caliente. We look forward to another exciting year and the completion of the Pond 1 restoration.

Maura Brackett

## Restoration of Pond 1 (Main Pond)



Photo by Susan Knoll

**Pond 1 looking west. Island on left. North end of pond on right**

The restoration of Pond 1 at Agua Caliente Park is underway. On April 22, 2019 Pima County turned off the well pump to Pond 1 to begin the draining process. They also started siphoning the water from Pond 1 to Pond 2 to fill it using Pond 1 water. Additionally, some fish (primarily Grass Carp) were transferred to pond 2 until the restoration is complete then will be returned to Pond 1. Most of the Red Eared Slider Turtles were transferred to a facility in Phoenix for adoption. Some migrated to Pond 2 and will return to Pond 1 when the project is complete. Some Mallard ducks remain around Pond 1 & 2. Other migratory ducks have departed Tucson

and hopefully the restoration will be complete prior to their arrival again this winter.

With our extensive winter rains, the Spring/Stream started flowing again at a rate of about 30 gallons per minute. The staff built a dam at the lower end of the stream to divert the flow around Pond 1 and into Pond 2. This will remain in place as long as the stream is flowing. Pond 1 is now mostly drained and is in the process of drying to allow the next restoration phase.

Pima County has awarded the first of two contracts for the development of a construction and landscaping plan (removal

of some palm trees, all the cattails, & addition of some plants). The contract for the construction/restoration activities (dredging, bridge, wildlife island, & polymer emulsion) should be awarded this summer.

During the timeframe when heavy equipment will be operating, the park will be closed for public safety. To minimize when the park will be fully closed, Pima County may only close portions to public access as specific tasks are completed. Pima County anticipates the timeframe of partial and full closures to be for a period up to four months. Closure notices will be posted at the front gate in advance and updates/notices posted on the Pima County NRPR Agua Caliente Park website and FOAC's website.

For additional information, you can call Pima County NRPR M-F from 8-5 at (520) 724-5000. Updated information will also be posted on the NRPR website: <http://www.pima.gov/aguacaliente> and FOAC's website: [www.friendsofaguacaliente.org](http://www.friendsofaguacaliente.org).

## Friends of Agua Caliente, Inc. Board of Directors

### Standing Committee Memberships annotated in ( ) below

Maura Brackett, President (president[at]friendsofaguacaliente.org)  
Jan Baker, Vice President (vice\_president@.....)  
Sylvia Olberding, Secretary (secretary@.....)  
Jim Knoll, Treasurer (treasurer@.....)

(Membership / Social Media)

Tina Baker (Social Media)  
Peggy Denny (Nominations)  
Misha Farinech  
Pete Filiatrault (Co-Founder)  
Judy Gray  
Jerry Martin  
Pam Rossetter (Social Media)  
Joyce Roughton  
Sandy Sarah (Co-Founder)  
Mike Sprung (Social Media)  
Joanne Triplett



Torch Cactus Flower - Ranch House

Board Member email addresses are:  
FirstLast@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.Org

FOAC Website: <http://www.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 [info\[at\]FriendsOfAguaCaliente.Org](mailto:info[at]FriendsOfAguaCaliente.Org) to be placed on the electronic distribution (*we do not release our database to anyone & only send out 4-5 emails/year (2 newsletters & may major Park news)*).

## 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 website, or scan the QR Code. We will post current events & pictures so please "like, follow, comment, and share".



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

Desert Tortoise (Gopherus agassii). All tortoises are terrestrial. Best time to see one is early morning as it is heading back to its burrow. They are truly nocturnal.



Photo by Susan Knoll

**Size:** 14" in length. **Weight** 10-12 lbs. Has a short tail. **Description:** Domed dark brown shell with prominent growth rings. Hind feet are stumpy and the forefeet are scraper-like. Lives 80-100 years. The Desert Tortoise uses its forefeet to dig burrows in sandy soil for nesting and protection along washes. **Diet** is fruit (mainly ripened red prickly

pear fruit in summer). Also feeds on leaves and native grasses.

The Arizona Game & Fish adopts out captive desert tortoises that cannot be released back into the wild. Captive tortoises can transmit diseases that can kill the wild population. Text CRITTER to 41444 to support this program or visit <https://www.azgfd.com/wildlife/nongamemanagement/tortoise/captivecare/>.

Ocelot Cats (Felidae). Hiking a trail system near sunrise or sunset is the best way to catch a glimpse of an Ocelot. They are nocturnal, silent, and solitary. Rare in Arizona.

**Size:** 24-27" nose to tail. **Weight** 15-30 lbs. **Description:** Slim-medium size. Overall tan to yellow, covered in black spots,

rings, stripes, bars with tan centers. Small head, large ears, long tail with heavy black spots. Lives 7-15 years. **Habitat** includes forest, fields, dense chaparral, up to 12,000 feet elevation. Den is often in hollow log, rock crevice, or a pile of tree branches. **Diet** is small mammals, mice, squirrels, rabbits, birds, and reptiles. Breeding June-July and birthing fall-winter. 1-3 kittens born blind and seeing after 3-4 weeks. They are constantly on the move and hunt at night. Males occupy about 7 square miles and females around 4. For many years they were hunted for their beautiful pelts. More than 200,000 ocelots were killed each year. The Ocelot is endangered throughout its range and is now protected.

Get out and enjoy your desert — its FREE!

Judy Gray, Naturalist

## Membership in the Friends of Agua Caliente

Join Friends of Agua Caliente!

Thank you to all of 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 the park & *NRPR* with funding and items they cannot normally purchase within their budget cycle is tremendous and we owe it all to you. As of June 2019 we have 271 supporters (members and donors) and through your generosity, we have raised over \$16,500 this fiscal year.

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 cannot do what we do without great members and donors!

Jim Knoll

## New FOAC Website

We have updated the *FOAC* website using a modern WordPress theme and I think you will enjoy visiting often. You will see the most important items in our scrolling Blog on the homepage. Just below the Blog will be direct access to lots of pictures by category. There is also other important information below that & access to other blogs on the right side of the page. At the top of the homepage, there is a menu system for access to *FOAC* & Park history and information, another way to get to the gallery pictures & videos, an events calendar & links and information to other websites. Use the web address at the bottom of the page or the QR code to the right.



Jim Knoll



Friends of Agua Caliente, Inc.  
P.O. Box 32005  
Tucson, AZ 85751-2005

## Tucson Audubon at Agua Caliente Park

Tucson Audubon inspires people to enjoy and protect birds through recreation, education, conservation, and restoration of the environment upon which we all depend. Pima County generously donates space in the Ranch House for our Nature



Photo by Susan Knoll

Shop. The shop is closed for the summer while the county replaces the windows in the shop and restores Pond 1 (main pond). We look forward to reopening in the fall. In the Meantime, please visit the **Tucson Audubon's Nature Shop** downtown at 300 E University Blvd. Proceeds from the Nature Shop benefit Tucson Audubon programs.

Save the date for the next Southeast Arizona Birding Festival.

August 7—11, 2019. There will be field trip workshops and a FREE nature expo. Headquarters again this year will be the Hilton Double Tree at Reid Park. The featured guest speakers will be Laura Erickson (scientist, teacher, writer, wildlife rehabilitator, professional blogger, public speaker, photographer, and Science Editor at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology) and Kevin Karlson (accomplished birder, author, professional tour leader, and wildlife photographer/instructor).

Tucson Audubon has a variety of opportunities to volunteer. Whatever your interest, we have a role for you! We can always use more volunteers in our Nature Shops. To learn more, email [volunteer\[at\]tucsonaudubon.org](mailto:volunteer[at]tucsonaudubon.org) or call (520) 209-1811.

Liz Harrison  
Nature Shop Volunteer

## FOAC 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*.



Photo by Susan Knoll

Hooded Oriole