

WELLSPRING NEWS

Winter 2020

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

Tucson, Arizona

From the President

Dear Friends of Agua Caliente,

I want to take this opportunity to reflect on the importance of our recently passed Emeritus Board Member, Chuck Ford. As a Tucson City Councilman, he was instrumental in obtaining \$200,000 from Roy P. Drachman (for whom the Park is named) for the purchase of the Agua Caliente 101 acre Park property. Thank you Chuck for your vision for our “desert oasis”. There will be a musical tribute to Chuck on January 11 at Dunbar Pavillion, 325 W. Second Street from 2-4 pm.

Thank you, our membership, for being part of the Friends of Agua Caliente Team. Your membership and donations make it possible for FOAC to provide support for education programs for schools and the adult Sunday speaker series. We are looking forward to these programs resuming after restoration completion and Park reopening.

Restoration of Pond 1 has been the highlight of the past year. Lots of progress has been made since it began on October 7. The pond excavation and grading work within the pond are nearly complete, the initial base coat of polymer liner has been applied, and the wildlife island has been constructed. The abutments for the bridge are under construction, and access improvements are under-

way on the shore. Remaining work includes final grading and filling the pond, application of the 2nd liner coat and completing bridge abutments, access improvements and landscaping. Lastly, construction of the “Bridge to the Island” will be scheduled once the other elements are completed. To this end, thanks to the support of our members, the FOAC will be contributing approximately \$15K towards construction of the bridge.

More information about the reconstruction is available on the FOAC website where you can view a video of Phase I. When restoration is complete, we will add a video of Phase II to the website.



Photo courtesy of Pima County Natural Resources Parks & Recreation

A new President and Secretary will be voted on at the FOAC Annual meeting January 27 at 7pm. Both

the Secretary and I will continue as Board members. It has been a pleasure serving as President and working with a strong supportive membership and an active 15 member Board. I am particularly pleased that the Board shares responsibilities for tasks like social media, newsletter, park liaison and historian.

We all are looking forward to the reopening of the Park and Dedication of Pond 1.

**Maura Brackett,
FOAC President**

Annual Meeting

The Annual Membership and Donor meeting will be Monday January 27, 2020 at 7 PM.

FOAC will review the status of funds and will vote on nominees for President, Secretary and Board Members for the next Terms of Service.

Pending the status of the pond renovation, the meeting location is yet to be announced.

To ensure you are notified of the meeting location, please RSVP:
info@friendsofaguacaliente.org.

Water Conservation at Agua Caliente Park

Back as early as 2000, Pima County has been concerned about water availability. Several studies determined that natural seepage out the bottom of the pond was a major cause of loss of water. Evaporation and vegetation around the pond were also contributing factors. Once flow from the spring dropped off precipitously, well water was the only alternative source available.

With the renovation of Pond One well underway, sealing the bottom is a priority. When Pond Two was renovated several years ago, a synthetic liner was used to seal the pond and a layer of dirt was placed over the liner. Now with Pond One a newer, more flexible and cost-effective alternative is being used. Called ESS-13, the liquid polymer emulsion is mixed into the soil after the pond clean-out is completed. This reduces hydraulic conductivity of the soil beyond its natural capacity by filling voids and modifying

the alignment of the clay particles in the soil to create a permanent barrier. The liquid sealing product is flexible, durable, naturally based and environmentally friendly. It will also be covered with a cap of native soil to protect the sealed layer. The new islands will be built on top of the sealed bottom layer of the pond.

The product is provided by Seepage Control, a company out of Chandler, Arizona with a long history of successfully treating ponds and lakes in Arizona and other states. The County successfully used ESS-13 to reconstruct the pond at the Historic Hacienda de la Canoa. Like the work at Canoa, Seepage Control staff are on site, actively advising on the proper methods and preparation to ensure a seamless and proper application of ESS-13.

With the sealing treatment, it is anticipated the annual water

volume needed to keep Pond One full will be greatly reduced, boosting water conservation efforts while maintaining the historic ponds and riparian habitats.

**Kerry Baldwin, Former
Pima County Natural
Resources Division Mgr.**

Website

FOAC's website has been redesigned! Thank you to the committee members for their time and efforts.

The website can be accessed at <http://www.FriendsOfAguaCaliente.Org>

Along with the key history of FOAC & Agua Caliente Park, the website includes information regarding significant issues affecting the Park, and current events for the month. You can also send an email to FOAC and find links to other related websites.

Friends of Agua Caliente, Inc. Board of Directors

Standing Committee Chairpersons annotated in () below

Maura Brackett, President
(Fundraising) (president[at]friendsofaguacaliente.org)

Jan Baker, Vice President
(vice_president@.....)

Jim Knoll, Treasurer
(Membership / Social Media)
(treasurer@.....)

Sylvia Olberding, Secretary
(secretary@.....)

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

Board Member email addresses are:
FirstLast@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.Org

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*.



Electronic Newsletter

Sending the newsletter electronically saves FOAC postage and you receive it in color. If you did not receive an electronic version and would like to be placed on the electronic distribution, please send an email to:

info@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.Org

We do not release our database to anyone.

Facebook

FOAC is on Facebook. Follow us to stay abreast of late breaking and current events. To find FOAC, search "Friends of Agua Caliente Tucson" within Facebook or access us from our website. We will post current events & pictures so please "like, follow, comment, and share".

Nature Corner: Our State Flower Comes from Beautiful Saguaros

Saguaros reach 40' to 60' tall. One measured 78', which is very rare.

Their stems, or arms, have ridges. Arms are lined with clusters of hard spines. The outer surfaces (skin) is covered with thick, waxy cuticles that waterproof the surface, restricting water loss while facilitating gas exchange. The outer surface folds into pleats called ribs. Inside, it also has woody ribs that hold up the skeleton of the cactus. The spines on the ribs are protection from herbivorous



Photo by Susan Knoll

animals and the sun. Their shade reduces heat load and water loss. A fully hydrated, large stem is 90% water, weighing 80 pounds per foot. An arm, weighing 2,000 pounds, could kill a person if it falls on them.

Water inside the saguaro heats slowly in the sun and cools it during cooler nights in the summer. It also, keeps the tissues above freezing on cold winter nights.

A tap root extends downward more than 2 feet. Roots are mostly 4 inches deep and reach horizontally out as far as the plant is tall. This is really a shallow root system for such a large cactus.

The flowers are white and the fruit is red on the ends of the stems, from mid-May to mid-June. The flower is 3 inches in diameter. The

red fruit has an aroma like an over-ripe melon. The flowers need self, cross-pollination for fruit to set. Bats, along with Doves, Gila Woodpeckers, House Finches and Hummingbirds need the nectar to survive. Native Americans gather the fruit to make ceremonial wine.

Seedlings grow slowly under "nurse" trees and are extremely vulnerable to heat, frost, freezes, rodents, rabbits and birds.

Saguaros make excellent nesting places for many birds, primarily woodpeckers and flickers (their nests are the highest).

Most saguaros live from 100 to 200 years. Think of the stories a saguaro could tell us. Agua Caliente Park has about 20 saguaros. Enjoy our beautiful park soon!

**Judy Gray, Naturalist
& FOAC Board Member**

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 December 2019 we have 145 supporters (members and donors) and through your generosity, we have raised \$10,230 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\[at\]FriendsOfAguaCaliente.org](mailto:info[at]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, Treasurer
& Committee Chairman**

Volunteer

Agua Caliente Park is seeking volunteers! Do you love the Park? Enjoy talking with people from all over the world? Then consider volunteering. There are several opportunities available with lots of flexibility.

Ranch House Volunteer: Greet visitors and lead informal tours of the historic Ranch House for small groups, individuals, and families.

Park Tour Guide Volunteer: Lead outdoor tours that include the spring, Ranch House, Rose Cottage, and Bunkhouse, as well as some of the ornamental plantings. All volunteers will receive appropriate training and free access to the majority of NRPR public programs and activities (a \$50 annual value).

Email education@pima.gov or call (520) 615-7855, ext. 4 for additional information.

Friends of Agua Caliente, Inc.

P.O. Box 32005

Tucson, AZ 85751-2005

Annual Meeting January 27, 2020
7 PM – Location to be announced
RSVP: info@friendsofaguacaliente.org

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 Shop.

While the pond reconstruction is taking a long time, the improvements will benefit the birds and their habitat and everyone who visits the park. While the pond was under reconstruction, the shop got new windows and some fresh paint. Next time you need the perfect gift come check us out!

The shop is a great place to shop for birding essential items, natural history items, children's books, games, and jewelry. Join the weekly bird walk on Thursday mornings and shop afterward and receive a 10% discount on all items. Proceeds from the Nature Shop benefit Tucson Audubon programs.

Nature Shop volunteers provide a wealth of information to visitors to the Nature Shop and the Ranch House. When the park reopens the shop will continue to be open Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Tucson Audubon will be looking at the possibility of opening the shop on all days that the Ranch House is open.

If you have any interest in volunteering in the shop please contact Debbie Honan, the Nature Shop Retail Manager, at 520-209-1807 or at <http://tucsonaudubon.org/nature-shop/>. You can also contact Luke Safford, TAS Volunteer Coordinator at volunteer@tucsonaudubon.org or 520-209-1811.

Help out desert birds by putting up nest boxes made locally specifically for our cavity nesting birds such as the American Kestrel and the Lucy's Warbler. These nest boxes are

available in our nature shops or you can see how to make one at www.tucsonaudubon.org, click Get Involved, then click Habitat at Home, and then click Desert Nest Boxes.

Save the date for the next Southeast Arizona Birding Festival, August 5-9, 2020. Check out the newest info on the 2020 Festival at tucsonaudubon.org/festival2020

When the shop reopens, hours of operation will be Thursday 9 AM to 2:30 PM, Friday 10 AM to 2:30 PM and Saturday 10 AM to 1:30 PM. We look forward to your visits to our shop.

Liz Harrison, Nature Shop Volunteer