

WELLSPRING NEWS

Summer 2023

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

Tucson, Arizona

From the President

Dear Friends of Agua Caliente Park,

We're finally in the full heat of summer and waiting for our glorious summer rains! While you are visiting the park, be sure to drop by the new water fountain that has a pet watering bowl. The purchase of this new fountain was made possible by your support of FOAC. Here's Lucy the Lab, accompanied by her human David Vincent (@DBProPhoto). Lucy told me she appreciated the refreshing water source so she could stay hydrated while her human took advantage of photographing the diverse birds at the park.



In January, I mentioned uninvited mosquitofish were released into the pond by someone visiting the park and they are greatly diminishing the population of native Gila Topminnow (also mosquito eaters), which AZ Game and Fish seeded into Pond 1. Unfortunately, in Pond 1, we now have many other species of non-native pond fish (including a large population of Koi) that have been introduced by unknown people. Park staff is doing what they can to remove the Koi and other intruders including invasive bullfrogs. Please help maintain the native species and do not release unwanted fish and other animals into our beautiful park.

The County anticipates starting installation of the planned Desert Garden this fall just south of where the palms burned. Have a look at the wonderful plans for the new area that will be planted with diverse native, low water use plants. Pathways, and benches will be placed around this new garden, which will provide a great new setting to relax and hang out with friends and family. FOAC has committed \$20,000 for this project from available funds and we will also be doing some additional fundraising to support installation of this new area (See more details on page 5).

The Ranch House is now staffed with volunteers from mid morning until early afternoon every day but Monday and Tuesday. The County Education Staff has placed lots of great Tucson and natural history books to peruse in the library located in the Ranch House's sunroom. The Gallery has rotating artists exhibiting their work throughout the year. Stop in and check out the beautiful Historic Ranch house, there's always something new to see.

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Presidents Letter cont.

Finally, FOAC participates in FotoFauna, a Sky Island Alliance (SIA) project. We record animals that appear on our cameras and submit them to SIA, which collects data from wildlife cameras all over the Tucson area and into Mexico. Here is one of the more amazing photos from an area that is normally dry.



The spring has been flowing since last September, filling ponds 2 and 3 and flooding the area behind Pond 1. Park staff redirected water flow to other parts of the park for some months. The Great Blue Heron has just taken off (you can still see ripples in the water). Also notice some large red-eared sliders (released pets) sitting on logs.

Pam Rossetter
FOAC President

Membership

Join Friends of Agua Caliente! Thank you to all of our loyal supporters. If you have not yet renewed, please consider supporting FOAC. We will be mailing out our 2024 requests in October. Our ability to support the Park with funding and items they cannot normally purchase is tremendous and we owe it all to you.

As of July 1, 2023, we have 314 supporters for the 2022-2023 year and through your generosity, we have raised \$26,650. This includes 263 renewals (68% renewal rate) and 52 new supporters. FOAC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation and donations are tax deductible.

Membership is \$15 for an Individual, \$25 for a Family, \$50 for Organizations and Donations of any amount are appreciated. Please send name, address, and email along with a check to Friends of Agua Caliente, Inc., PO Box 32005, Tucson, AZ 85751-2005. You can also securely support FOAC with PayPal or Credit Card from our website.

Your dedication to the Park and FOAC is greatly appreciated.

Jim Knoll, Membership

FOAC Website: <https://friendsofaguacaliente.org>

Board of Directors

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Board email addresses are:
FirstLast@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.
Org

Nature Programs

Nature Programs sponsored by Pima County NRPR at Agua Caliente Park in July and August include:

- ◆ *Birding Agua Caliente Park*, July 5th and 19th & August 2nd and 16th
Cost: \$5 activity fee.
- ◆ *Dragons and Damsels of Agua Caliente Park*, July 10th and August 7th
Cost: \$5 activity fee. Children free with paid adult.
- ◆ *Creatures of the Night*, July 13th and August 31st
Cost: \$10 activity fee.
- ◆ *Birding 101: Birding for all Ages and Abilities*, July 15th and August 12th
Cost: Free.
- ◆ *Lizards and Other Critters*, July 21st and August 18th
Cost: \$5 activity fee. Children free with paid adult.
- ◆ *Moth Night at Agua Caliente Park Thursday*, July 26th
Cost: Children free. Adults free with Membership, Non-Member Adult \$5 fee.

Information: www.pima.gov/nrpr,
eeducation@pima.gov or 520-724-5375

Save the (Native) Bees - Pam Rossetter, June 2023

Did you know that we live in a bee biodiversity hotspot? There are about 4,000 species of bees in North America (one of them is the honeybee). Scientists estimate that there are over 1,000 species of native bees in the Tucson Basin, including this beautiful sweat bee that enjoyed the salt on my margarita glass.



Green sweat bee getting salt from a margarita glass.

Tucson has more bee biodiversity than anywhere in the US and our native plants depend on these native pollinators to reproduce. Some reasons for this diversity are that our region has a diverse plant population and there is nearly always something in bloom. Some bees are very specific about the plants they pollinate, and some are generalists. The specialist may be active as adults only a couple of weeks a year. The well-known honeybee is only one of the over 1,000 species of bee. It arrived in the Americas with the Jamestown settlers and is important for agriculture.

Unlike their imported cousins, native bees don't make honey and they are generally solitary. Not

having a hive to protect, they aren't very inclined to sting you. Socially, honeybees and our native bees are very different animals. A honeybee hive can have up to 10,000 individuals and honey making gives the hive an energy reserve. Native bees tend to be solitary and don't make honey at all. All bees get their protein from pollen and energy



A very furry bee collecting pollen and nectar from an aster.

from flower nectar. A happy consequence of their food foraging is that bees collect pollen on their bodies and then some of this pollen drops off on other flowers they visit, pollinating flowering plants as the bee travels from flower to flower looking for food.

Most native bees (70%) nest in the ground, and the other 30% will nest in holes in old wood or other structures. Adult females will usually live for less than a month. During that time, she will build one or more nests in the ground (ground nesting), or in an old beetle hole (mason bees). She lays her eggs in these protected nests and provisions each egg with nectar and pollen (bee bread).

Save the (Native) Bees cont.

As opposed to honeybees, which care for the eggs and juveniles, native bees fly away after sealing the nest, leaving the eggs to fend for themselves. Because they don't have a nest to defend, native bees don't tend to sting as often as honeybees, but they'll sting you if they feel threatened.



A Diadasia (cactus bee) goes into her nest in the desert near my house.

Cactus bees are only out when cactus is blooming. A graveled landscape makes ground nesting impossible for native bees. Sometimes these bees will make many nests in a small area. I'm aware of at least one of these 'colonies' near AC Park. Cactus bees are common around any cactus flower and also like Globe Mallow.

You can see the perfect semicircles cut in this leaf by a leafcutter bee. A common type of native bee, they are not eating the leaves, rather, they will line their nests with them. Don't worry, the cutout in the leaf is just cosmetic and won't hurt your plant and the nest-building season is short. It's very sweet to see a leaf cutter bee flying with a rolled up leaf cutting in her claws.



For the last 5 years, I've been involved on a project with the Tucson Bee Collaborative to help learn more about the abundance and diversity of native bees in the Tucson area. We sampled along three transects for four years, one at Arizona Sonora Desert Museum (ASDM), one native desert on the west side of town, and one native desert 0.5 miles south of Agua Caliente Park. Besides a very small bee only around 1/8" long, the bee on my margarita glass was the most abundant bee sampled near the AC Park. It's been interesting to see how different the bee populations are on opposite sides of Tucson. For example, there are many more ground nesting cactus bees on the west side of town near the Tucson Mountains.

What you can do to help save the bees:

- ◆ Choose native plants, rewild your landscape.
- ◆ Provide nesting sites (leave some bare ground and old 'wormy' wood).
- ◆ Avoid pesticides.

See if you can find signs of native bees nesting and foraging around you. I find it fun to peek into flowers to see who is there, maybe you will, too!

Resources:

Tucson Bee Collaborative - <https://www.tucsonbeecollaborative.com/>

Desert plants and native bees - <https://wateruseitwisely.com/blog/desert-plants-and-desert-native-bees-2/>

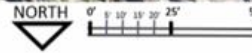
Xerces Society – nonprofit for the protection of pollinators - <https://xerces.org/>

Agua Caliente Park Desert Gardens Matching Funds Challenge



NOTES

- All benches at approximate locations and shall be field sighted.
- Stormwater harvesting basins
 - locations may be adjusted to intercept field flow paths.
 - See next sheet for detail.
- Event Area "20' wide x 25' allowing 40 people sitting.



KEY

- Do not disturb beyond fence/ line except as shown
- Existing trees to remain
- Existing bench (1)
- New Bench (3)
- 8' Stabilized DG pathway- 440 LF
- Stormwater harvesting basins (20) 25' x 7'
- Some fill from basin grading and scattered 4" to 12" native rockwork to stabilize slopes. 70% coverage.
- Native boulders to match stream: (13) 18" to (13) 24"

PLANT SCHEDULE

Scientific Name	Common Name	CODON	Type
Trees			
<i>Gossypium thurberi</i>	Desert cotton	GOTH	Tree
<i>Prosopis velutina</i>	Velvet Mesquite	PRVE	Tree

Accent/

Scientific Name	Common Name	CODON	Type
Shrub/Grass/ Vine			
<i>Agave murpheyi</i>	Murphy's agave	AGMU	A
<i>Antigonon leptopus</i>	Queen's wreath	ANPU	V
<i>Aristida purpurea</i>	Purple Three Awn	ASOU	G
<i>Euphorbia antisyphlica</i>	Candelilla	EUAN	A
<i>Asclepias subulata</i>	Desert milkweed	ASSU	A
<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>	Buttonbush	CEOC	S
<i>Dodonaea viscosa</i>	Hopsed Bush	DOVI	S
<i>Eupatorium greggii</i>	Gregg's Mist	EUGR	S
<i>Glandularia goodingii</i>	Gooding's verbena	GLGO	S
<i>Justicia spicigera</i>	Mexican Honeysuckle	JUSP	S
<i>Lycium sp.</i>	Wolfberry	LYSP	S
<i>Menodora scabra</i>	Rough menodora	BAMU	S
<i>Muhlenbergia rigens</i>	Deer Grass	MURI	G
<i>Penstemon sp.</i>	Penstemon	PESP	S
<i>Ruellia nudiflora</i>	Ruellia	RUNU	S
<i>Senna covesii</i>	Desert senna	SECO	S
<i>Tecoma stans</i>	Yellow Trumpet Bush	TEST	S
<i>Thymophylla pentachaeta</i>	Dogweed	THPE	S
<i>Trichloris crinita</i>	False Rhodes Grass	TRCR	G

Note: green highlighted plants are Contractor provided

T: Tree Yellow flag w/ CODON
 S: Shrub Orange flag w/ CODON
 G: Grass Green flag w/ CODON
 A: Accent White flag w/ CODON
 Use wide permanent black marker to write CODON

PLANTING DESIGN
Event Center
AGUA CALIENTE
 FEB 2023 Sht 1 of 5

We need your help. As many of you know, the Park suffered a lightning strike September 28, 2022, destroying a grove of palm trees and the open grass area between the entrance road and the stream. As devastating as this was, it is an opportunity to reimagine the space as a lush desert garden that would be a great place to gather, celebrate, and meditate. Native plants will invite pollinators and the drip irrigation along with stormwater basins will reduce water use, adding to the Park's sustainability. Meandering paths will be dotted with benches for visitors to relax and enjoy the space. Plantings will be strategically placed to encircle the area, creating a sense of seclusion. An intimate Event Area, designed for groups of up to 40 people has also been included in the design.

Pima County Natural Resources Parks and Recreation will restore the area over the summer and fall. Total project cost is estimated to be \$55,000 with the County's insurance covering about \$13,000. The Friends of Agua Caliente has agreed to help with funding. Thanks to our regular memberships and donations, we donated \$20,000 this year. We would like your help in raising an additional \$20,000 through a Matching Funds Challenge. To this end, FOAC will match every dollar you donate up to \$10,000.

To donate, send a check to FOAC and mail to PO Box 32005, Tucson, AZ 85751-2005. Annotate it is for the Desert Garden. You can also donate online through the FOAC website at: <https://friendsofaguacaliente.org>. Make sure you indicate it is for the Desert Garden during the donation process or send an email to info@friendsofaguacaliente.org

We appreciate your help and thank you in advance for your continued dedication to the park!

Friends of Agua Caliente, Inc.

P.O. Box 32005

Tucson, AZ 85751-2005

Social Media

Looking for information on Agua Caliente Park events, the history of the park, or learning about what you might see at the park? Check out our Facebook page, our website and our YouTube channel:

<https://www.facebook.com/friendsofaguacaliente>

<https://friendsofaguacaliente.org/>

<https://www.youtube.com/@friendsofaguacaliente9557>

Each month we share on Facebook, Pima County National Resources Parks and Recreation's online and in person nature events including those located at the park. There are historical tours and lecture series as well! You'll also learn about the art

exhibits showing in the Ranch House Gallery. Each month we highlight flora and fauna at the park, share beautiful landscape photos and share improvements to the park made possible in part through donations from people like you (renovations, park benches, the main pond bridge, and drinking fountains to name a few).

You too can share your experiences at the park by sending your photos through Facebook messenger or email to TinaBaker@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.Org and we will share your photos to social media with credit to the photographer.

Tina Baker
Social Media

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.