

the Valley View

Cascabel...hard to find....harder to leave.



Issue #7

An Occasional Cascabel, Arizona Newsletter

January 2018

In this issue...

We celebrate our iconic, ancient Saguaro, the sentinel that signals your arrival at the Community Center. Bob Evans suggested that we'd better give it its due before a storm took it out and so a call went out for photographs of this ancient tree. Here are the results with Bob's introduction and Tom Orum's scientific age estimate. If only we could know what this cactus has seen over all these years.

The saguaros that you will see as you drive along the Cascabel Road and go north of mile marker 22 are some of the most robust that you find in the state.

The large one that stands above the road and just south of the Community Center is among the oldest in the area. I do not drive along that stretch of road without admiring this huge plant. This one and others like it are what brought me to this part of the world.



Photo Tom Talbott

My wife Jill and I made several trips in the mid to late 1990s from our home in Boulder, Colorado, to the Nature Conservancy property in Ramsey Canyon. On one of those trips we visited Saguaro National Park on our way to the airport, and drove the loop that took us into the Park. Jill saw all of those saguaros standing majestically throughout the landscape, and fell in love with them. On our way home she told me, "I just have to own some property that has saguaros on it."

Soon after we got home she informed me that she was going shopping. She made two or three trips to southeast Arizona looking for land, and at one point she drove through Cascabel. She stopped at Sun Station and talked to Jeff, who told her about Dana Deeds. She was so impressed with the saguaros that she found here that when she got home, we began making plans to return together and have a look.

She contacted Dana and we met for breakfast at the Horse Shoe Cafe. He showed us several places, including the one where Lisa Vogel lives, and we

finally settled on the place where I now live. We closed in February of 2000.

Jill died in May of 2007. During the intervening time, we made many trips to this property. Each time that we came, she and I would walk and look at the saguaros. We would

measure the smaller ones and she would record the data in a notebook that I still have. She took delight in seeing how much certain individuals had grown since our last trip.

Now, as I drive on Canyon Road and the Cascabel Road, I remember those times. She would be heart broken to know that during a cold spell a few years ago, I lost four large plants, including one that stood near the yurt. We looked at that one every time we drove down the drive way.

The large one that is near the Community Center survived that cold spell, just as it has survived many other events in the years that it has stood in that place. One day it too will be gone, but fortunately we will have the pictures on the following pages to help us to remember it.



2003 Photo by Dick Henderson

How old is the Community Center saguaro?

By Tom Orum

The most common way to estimate the age of a saguaro is to measure its height and then use a table to estimate age from height. A standard reference table for the Rincon Mountain District of Saguaro National Park is Table 2-10 by Warren Steenbergh and Charles Lowe in *Ecology of the the Saguaro: III Growth and Demography*, published in 1983.* A challenge in estimating the age of the Community Center saguaro is that it's top is now off. Fortunately, Dick Henderson has provided a photo of the saguaro taken in 2003 and

2005 Photo by Robert McClure



Robert McClure in 2005 when the top of the main stem was still intact. So, to estimate the age of the saguaro, we will use a four step process: 1) estimate the height of the saguaro in 2003; 2) use the Steenbergh and Lowe Table 2-10 for an initial estimate of the age in 2003; 3) add 14 years to the 2003 estimate to get a 2017 estimate of its age; and 4) make an educated guess about the uncertainty of the 2017 estimate.

Based on measurements of heights to the base of arms (branches) of the saguaro made recently, measuring to the base of the same arms on Dick's photos, measuring to the top of the main stem on Dick's photo, and ratioing up, we come up with an estimated height of the saguaro in 2003 to be 37 feet. The Steenbergh and Lowe table gives an initial estimate of an age of 124 years old in 2003 with the height-age table based on saguaros growing in the Rincon Mountain District of Saguaro National Park in the late 1970's. Adding 14 years to that estimate gives a starting point estimate for the age in 2017 to be 138 years. Saguaros grow faster where there is more rain. So, has the area around the Community Center received more rain over the past century than the area where the measurements were made in Saguaro National Park? If so, the saguaro will be somewhat younger than the initial estimate. We have found that there is a lot of variability in the growth rates of saguaros we have followed for years in the park. For example, saguaros 14 to 16 feet tall that have been followed closely since they were small will vary in age from 45 to 65 years old depending on their growth rate. Taking into account variability in growth rates, a range of possible ages for this saguaro would be from about 130 to 150 years old. This corresponds to the saguaro germinating and becoming established in the 19th century: sometime between 1867 and 1887.

* U. S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, Washington D.C., Scientific Monograph Series, Number 17, 1983.



2017 Photo by Vera Moritz



Photo by Tom Talbott



When they were here last spring volunteering at Sweetwater Center, Tom and Katie Talbott sat up there at the Community Center for quite a while, waiting for the night sky to offer a backdrop for this specimen cactus.

But while celebrating the age and the balancing act of this elderly saguaro sentinel, let's also not conceal the ravages of time and the weather it has withstood. Salute it as you go by!

Photos by Sue Newman



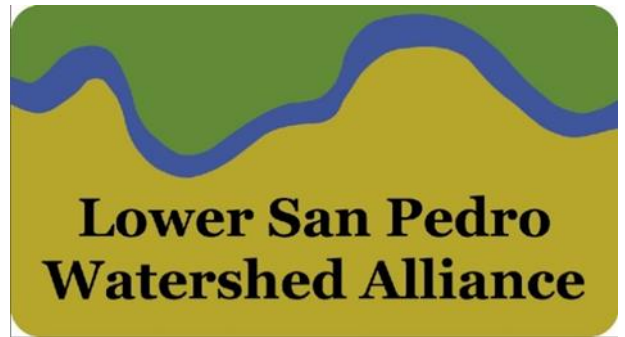


The Ubiquitous Mesquite Tree

By Mick Meader

The indigenous Mesquite Tree has sustained wildlife and native civilizations for over 10,000 years here in Arizona. They are an integral part of our riparian habitats, providing food, shelter and erosion prevention. Now some ranchers and government agencies have decided that the Mesquite Tree is bad for our environment. These people claim the tree uses too much water. These people are wrong. New studies prove that Mesquite Trees use much less water than agricultural crops use. Mesquite Bosques are a favorite place for all wildlife to dwell.

In 2014, Mick wrote an extensive report summarizing the scientific literature on water use by mesquites and local agricultural crops. His report is available to anyone who is interested, from Chris Eastoe <eastoe@email.arizona.edu>



Watershed-scale planning for riparian conservation. For more information contact

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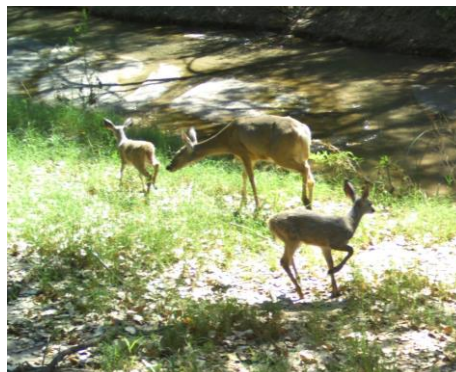


Photo by George Bushno

The Cascabel Conservation Association Wildlife Monitoring Project continues to collect data on the animals of Cascabel. The main volunteer on the project is Alex Binford-Walsh. Although mountain lions and bears are few and far between, we continue to get pictures of our animal neighbors.

There are currently ten trail cameras along the river corridor in Cascabel. They are placed with permission from landowners, and have "Info" boxes below them (for the most part) that give human visitors the option of having their pictures deleted. Alex is the volunteer that checks the cameras and does the data-entry. If you think there might have been an embarrassing picture taken of you (looking like a bear in the woods?), talk to Alex before he checks the cameras next and he can let you look through the memory card before he does.

Below are some pictures from the recent camera checks.



Game night at the Community Center



Photo Grace Foreman

Foremans: Isaac, Elijah, Elaina, Ben, Jacob, and Damion Quisenberry
Background Jesse Foreman and Carl Howard

Jacquie Dale and Paul Buccigrossi (where Lisa Vogel now lives) have given up the gypsy life (somewhat) and after spending the last 5 years near the Pacific ocean have landed on the Atlantic side of Canada. We just bought a little farmstead near Harbourville on the beautiful Bay of Fundy in Nova Scotia. We still plan to do a bit of winter travel to visit family and friends in Arizona. If any Cascabelians find themselves in the Maritimes, please stop by and say hello.



Cascabel Community Center

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Valley View Logo - Dave Shreeve & Barbara Clark

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Email: snewsy@rnsmtc.com

Printed copies available at the Community Center or by request. For ad space send business card or other copy and \$5 to Sue Newman or check to CCC.

Fair Saturday night after party



A great music jam session with Way Out West crew and Ralph Waldt, Mark Apel and Louisa Foreman Photos Neal Rudikoff

October Garden Party



Charlie Ff in his element as bartender

Photos Sue Newman



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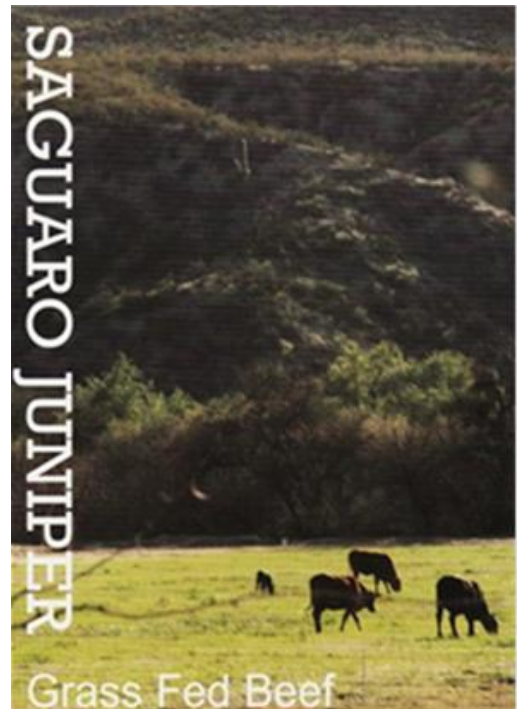
Rainfall Totals for 2017

3 Links Farm raingage by Casa													2017
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL
Totals	1.13	0.25	0.05	0	0.1	0	6.37	0.87	0.33	0	0.07	0.1	9.27
Cascabel Clayworks NWS raingage by fairgrounds													
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL
Totals	1.21	0.24	0.1	0	0.16	0.2	7.74	0.86	0.54	0	0.03	0.27	11.31
NWS raingauge at Wilkinsons													
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL
Totals	0.75	0.25	0.01	0.02	0.13	0	5.95	1.58	0.65	0.02	0.1	0.28	9.74



The Mount Lemon
fire this past
summer, startling
at sunset, was
doused by the
welcome start of
the monsoon.
Photo Sue Newman

The Cascabel CPA
David Blocker
212-1040



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