

Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park **NEWSLETTER**

Spring 2019 Volume 31

Pinnacle Peak Wildflowers

by Nancy Grant

Wildflowers bloomed early this year. We had a record rainfall the past five months; add warm weather into the mix, and you get early wildflowers. The Sonoran Desert came alive with color!



The flowers at Pinnacle Peak are diverse. During wildflower season, you'll see the delicate blue fiesta flower, the lesser yellowthroat gilia, and the peppergrasses. You'll also see a mix of blue Coulter's lupine, beautiful brittlebush, purple notch-leaf scorpion-weed, yellow fiddleneck, California primrose, Arizona desert thorn, wolfberry, and of course the Mexican golden poppy.

The Mexican golden poppy (*Eschscholzia californica* ssp. *mexicana*) is a favorite and one of the earliest wild flowers to grow. You couldn't miss them because they were everywhere.



A small perennial plant, 6-16 inches tall, with fern-like leaves, and orange-yellow, cup-shaped flowers on single stalks, the Mexican golden poppy grows below 4,500 ft. The Spanish name, *amopalo del campo*, means "poppy of the countryside."

When there is ample winter rain in the desert they grow profusely, covering the desert in a golden carpet. They open on bright, sunny days and close up every afternoon before the sun sets.

The Mexican golden poppy is a subspecies of the California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica* ssp. *californica*) and prefers dry desert areas, while the California poppy grows in valleys, on hillsides and in coastal areas.



Another difference is the first leaves on Mexican golden poppies are linear and undivided while the California poppy leaves are split into a Y shape. They just make you smile as you marvel at their sturdiness--surviving cold night temperatures, rain, and wind. They show us the beauty of the desert.

I hope you had a chance to go out in the desert to see the wildflowers. It doesn't matter if you hike, bike, or ride, you don't miss out. Wildflower season is a beautiful time of year!

Meet Volunteers Lee and Sue Goode

by Kelly Hayes

Married couple Lee and Sue Goode volunteer regularly together in the office at Pinnacle Peak Park. Not only are they welcoming and kind, bringing a warmth to all visitors to the park, but they also bring a wealth of knowledge about a variety of subjects.

Lee has a background in geology, engineering, and international business, as well 22 years experience in the army and army reserve. He has developed several educational materials for our volunteer training, as well as informational posters for the general public. Lee's specialty is geology, but he has also developed materials on plants, mammals, reptiles, and insects. He has enjoyed the challenge to learn more about his Apple "Pages" program to develop these.

Sue was an Occupational Therapist for 35 years and continues to help people through volunteering with the Fire Department. Sue enjoys taking pictures at the Park and learning more about the Sonoran Desert. She also volunteers with Lee in the Scottsdale Public Library System.

Besides volunteering, Sue and Lee enjoy spending time with their four children and four grandsons. Some of Sue's other pastimes are reading, knitting, and doing puzzles of all kinds. Lee enjoys genealogy, history, and geology—always enthusiastic to learn more!



They have been and still are avid travelers. Between the two of them, they have spent time in the Philippines, Hawaii, Japan, California, Korea, Alaska, Australia, and India (just to name a few!).

Both Sue and Lee are interesting and cultured people who love continuing to learn more. We admire their enthusiasm and dedication for Pinnacle Peak Park and the desert. We sure are lucky to have them volunteering here!

Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park Volunteer Appreciation Event

by Brian Carson

On March 23 the Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park (FOPPP) hosted their annual Volunteer Appreciation Event to thank our volunteers for their continued support of the park.

The event was held at PNPk, whose owner, Kellie Pruitt, used Pinnacle Peak Park as the namesake for the restaurant. Her appreciation for the park has inspired her to offer a donation to the FOPPP from every signature drink sold. The FOPPP are very grateful to Kellie for hosting the event and for her continuing donations.

The FOPPP support the volunteer program at Pinnacle Peak Park with training, clothing and necessary materials. This



helps the City of Scottsdale operate the park, which is open 4,756 hours per year.

For 2018, City of Scottsdale budgeted 3,238 man-hours to cover the operating hours of the park, leaving a deficit of 1,518 man-hours. Our wonderful volunteers cover this deficit and more. In offering their precious time, the volunteers provided 7,568 hours for 2018.

Volunteers are recognized at several levels depending on number of hours served. This year's volunteers who were recognized were:

Silver, 500-999 hours: Bob Scalia.

Bronze, 250-499 hours: Jill Bauza, Lee Goode, Rick McNerney, Scott Roberts and Nina Tozzi.

Volunteer of the Year: Leona Weinstein

The Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park thanks them all for their dedication.

The first week of April was Volunteer Appreciation Week at Pinnacle Peak Park. Don't forget to thank a volunteer, and as well, if you are looking to rehydrate after a great hike, don't forget to check out PNPk!

Help Save Our Beautiful Sonoran Desert

by Leona Weinstein

When immigrants came to America, they did not come alone, but brought many plants with them: some deliberately and many more by accident. These plants have adapted to their new environment and are thriving at the expense of our native plants.

Some of the more recent plant arrivals are from Eurasia and Africa and include: sahara mustard, buffel and fountain grasses. Densely growing fountain grass aggressively out-competes native plants for resources like water, nutrients, and area to grow. It provides fuel for fires and is the first to grow back after a wildfire.

Fountain grass threatens our sensitive Sonoran desert. We have active programs to eliminate these invasive plants and



have been removing fountain grass from the McDowell Sonoran Preserve and Pinnacle Peak Park for years.

Fountain grass looks similar to many native grasses, so identification is key. Fountain grass can be up to five feet tall and grows in thick dense bunches. It has a long spike at the top of the plant called the inflorescence that makes it easy to spread its seeds in the wind.

With a diligent eye and a lot of manual labor by trained staff and volunteers, there is hope to limit, if not eliminate, the spread of invasive plants at the McDowell Sonoran Preserve and Pinnacle Peak Park.

You can help by removing fountain grass in your yard and replacing it with a native species like purple three-awn. This will limit its spread into the wild, reduce the potential for catastrophic wildfires, and save our beautiful Sonoran desert!

The Generosity of Native Resources International

by Yvonne Massman

If you have spent any time around the valley, you may have seen a truck, with this artistic tree logo, at a future development project site:



Founded in 1994, Native Resources International (NRI) is co-owned by Rob Kater and Jeff Homan. This company of approximately 80 employees is an environmental gem in the valley.

NRI focuses on preserving native plants, while being environmentally sensitive. Plant relocation is priority number one, and they will do all that they can to make sure the plants continue to thrive, which is where Pinnacle Peak Park comes into play!

While training for a month-long trip to Japan, which

included hiking Mount Fuji, Rob spent many hours on the Pinnacle Peak Park trail. While doing so, he generously formulated a plan to donate saguaros to the park that were salvaged from the iconic Rawhide site.

At first he donated eight potted saguaros to place in areas where hikers typically go off the trail.

Then he had a second inspiration: one hundred saguaros!

With this donation, the non-profit, Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park, paid the \$8.00 required Department of Agriculture plant tag, then sold them to the volunteers at the bargain price of \$20 each. This turned into an exciting fundraising opportunity that yielded the FOPPP \$1,200.00.

Not only did the park volunteers acquire a piece of Scottsdale history, they have the signature plant of the Sonoran Desert to grow old with, too.

If you would like to learn more about the positive impact that NRI is making in the valley, go to www.nativeresources.com. I'm sure you'll be impressed!

Pinnacle Peak Park Scheduled Activities:

Friday, April 19	Registration begins for Astronomy Talk*
Friday, May 3	7:30 pm, Astronomy Talk**
Saturday, May 11	Registration begins for Full Moon Hike*
Saturday, May 18	7:45 pm, Full Moon Hike
Saturday, May 25	Registration begins for Astronomy Talk*
Saturday, June 8	8:00 pm, Astronomy Talk**
Monday, June 10	Registration begins for Full Moon Hike*
Monday, June 17	8:00 pm, Full Moon Hike
Friday, August 23	Registration begins for Astronomy Talk*
Friday, September 6	7:15 pm, Astronomy Talk**
Friday, September 6	Registration begins for Full Moon Hike*
Friday, September 13	6:45 pm, Full Moon Hike

* Call the Pinnacle Peak Park main number at: (480) 312-0990 to make reservations for the Astronomy Talk or Full Moon Hike.

** Minimum age to attend the Astronomy Talk is eight years old.

Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park

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