



Fall Newsletter, 2019

Hello to all our members, visitors and volunteers!

Where did the summer go? It seems like it always flies by no matter where you spend it. If you haven't been by the River Preserve since the fall floods, stop by and see if you can detect the changes made by river. It's always a lesson in the power of water when you see that channels have been moved, deepened or abandoned and more large logs are piled up against the trees. While much of Arizona lacked monsoon moisture, late September hurricane remnants brought forth layer of green grass in the understory – a respite if you're missing the northern climes where you spent the summer. You'll also notice new signage and the big new bird sighting board dedicated to volunteers Jean Arrowsmith and Dave Bradford. Both Jean and Dave have been very active volunteers at the Preserve. Dave has also been a long time Board member of FoH and continues to support its work.

You will also notice a new staff member on your next visit: "Cleo", the California kingsnake! White Tank Mountain Park transferred Cleo to us a couple of months ago and is settling into her new digs in the Visitor Center.



She is about 15 years old and was at White Tank for 12 of those, during which time she became Jessica Bland's favorite captive animal when she was the ranger there (Jessica is the Park Supervisor at the Preserve now). Stop by and say hi to Cleo!

Is it time to renew your membership?

To support the goals and activities of the Friends of Hassayampa, we need your ongoing membership and donations. The easiest way to renew or join is at FoHarizona.org with PayPal or a credit card.

Sign Up Now - Save the Date - 2019 Year in Review – Saturday, December 14th

You are invited to what promises to be a memorable event when Ranger Eric and others share highlights through pictures, videos and stories of the natural events, wildlife sightings and Preserve happenings from the past year. **FoH will be raffling off a holiday wine basket at both events.**

- From 3:30-5:00PM, Friends of Hassayampa members and HRP volunteers are invited to hear Ranger Eric's presentation in Sanger Building. Please bring a potluck dish to share; the FoH Board will provide drinks. This is free for HRP volunteers and FoH members.
- From 5:30-7:00PM, Ranger Eric will make his presentation to the public, also in the Sanger Building. Luminarias will be set up to enjoy the garden and a door prize, snacks and cider will be provided by FoH. If you are a member or volunteer and not able to attend the 3:30PM program but wish to attend the 5:30PM program, PLEASE SIGN UP through the front desk (928-684-2772), as space is limited.

You've Heard of a Teddy Bear's Picnic, But a Badger Picnic?

We know they live at the Preserve, but they're seldom seen. Lately though there have been many sightings of an American badger who's been coming out from cover to take advantage of the heavy crop of fruit that's fallen from the fan palms in the picnic area. Badgers also find food by digging into burrows with their long claws to catch small rodents and sometimes snakes. Their own burrows are larger, about 12" across. Can you imagine what a baby badger looks like? Maybe we'll find out next spring.



Where were You Last Weekend?

We hope you were among the 165 people who enjoyed the Thanksgiving Luminary walk on the evening of November 16th. Being at the Hassayampa River Preserve at night is always special (Ranger Eric's Creatures of the Night Walk is always filled!), but it was made extra special with a portion of the quieter trails lit by luminarias and rangers on hand to offer their knowledge. Participants were invited to reflect on and be grateful for the gifts and wonders of the outdoors. And like in a game of "I Spy", the luckiest spotted a ringtail, gray foxes, a raccoon, spotted and hooded skunks, and even a kingsnake in the

Preserve's dark corners. Cider and snacks were provided and many of the luminarias were decorated by April Veraldi's students at Hassayampa Elementary School, as well as by our Nature Rangers that afternoon. Staff and volunteers hosted a few discovery stations focusing on cooking with desert foods, ethnobotany, wildlife, and the health benefits of nature ('Vitamin N'). Having been so successful, the plan is to repeat this opportunity going forward.



FoH Board members Bernadine McCollum and Sue Dolphin informed about desert foods. Those are mesquite beans in foreground for grinding into flour.

What Has Friends of Hassayampa Been Doing?

For the birds – The hummingbird syrup, seed and thistle feeders continue to be a draw in the garden. While many of the birds who partake are regulars (we're looking at you house finches, goldfinches and Anna's hummingbirds!) there are always less common birds to be sighted, like our beloved cardinals and even rarer indigo buntings and broad billed hummingbirds for the patient watcher. Ranger Eric reports that 9 of the 25 Lucy's warblers nest boxes provided by FoH were occupied and successfully produced offspring. We hope they return next year and tell their friends!



For the Native Plant Garden – Our intrepid gardeners, Pat and Ron Sigler were able to plant two new baby giant saguaros, in keeping with the original plan for the garden. The hope is that they'll be of good size by the time our older saguaros (seen behind one of the new 'babies' lower right) need replacing. We are also about to place a bench and plaque in the garden dedicated to one of the FoH founders and constant supporters, Jody Anderson who passed away last year.

For the children – Nature Rangers continues to provide intriguing opportunities to experience the natural world through science and the arts. A program about bats (of course!) was especially well attended, with 38 kids and parents.

Another successful Kids Camp took place in June. A focus each day on a different group of animals and additional knowledgeable rangers brought in from other Maricopa County Parks, made for lots of fun and learning. FoH provided snacks to keep the energy flowing.

Nature Camp kids learning about....



Birds

Fish and Aquatic
Animals, Plants and
Insects!



And Reptiles!



For Wickenburg - Mojo, the Wild at Heart turkey vulture used for education events was sponsored by FoH for the 2nd annual “Bats and Buzzards on the Bridge” on September 26th, Despite it falling at the end of the largest late summer storm, at least 220 visitors stopped by to see the wildlife spectacle and check out tables hosted by FoH, Maricopa County Parks, Arizona Game & Fish Department, Town of Wickenburg, Wickenburg Conservation Foundation, and Sonoran Audubon.

The bats gave a bigger show than last year, really coming out in droves and flood waters running on the Hassayampa from the storm added even more drama to the scene.



Changes on the Friends of Hassayampa Board

The Friends of Hassayampa Board would like to acknowledge the longtime service of Sandy Dolter as Secretary of the organization. Sandy has stepped down from that position but remains a valued member of the Board. Thank you!

We've also welcomed three new members to the Board. Well one, Glenda Simmons..., has returned to the Board after serving firstly as Executive Secretary and then leading for 5 years as President of the Arizona Archaeological Society. Welcome back! The others are Sue Dolphin, who has been active with Wickenburg Conservation Foundation and Federation for many years, and Suzi Minor, who is a certified Forest Therapy guide. Welcome and thank you for bringing experience and expertise to the Board!



Please bookmark the **AmazonSmile** URL and use it when shopping on Amazon this holiday season and beyond. Select Friends of Hassayampa as your charitable organization and Amazon donates .5 % of your purchases to our cause. <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/47-0940900>

Don't Forget!!!

- Your donations are what keep FOH programs and outreach going! It's easy to donate at the FOH website (FOHarizona.org) with PayPal or your credit card. Or send your check to the address below with your address and email so that we can acknowledge your gift. Gifts of \$35 or more include annual membership. **For gifts of \$50 and over, we offer a coupon for park entry. This coupon is good for one visit for:**

*** a group of up to four people to visit the Hassayampa River Preserve (up to a \$20 value)**

*** OR for a carload (up to 8 people) to visit one of the other Maricopa County Parks and recreation sites.**

**You can use the entry coupon yourself or give it to someone who has yet to discover the Preserve!
What a great stocking stuffer!**

-Volunteer at the Preserve! We need your ideas and help! The company is good, and by volunteering we expand the ability of the staff to focus on their programs. Contact Jessica at (928) 684-2772 to learn about current opportunities.

**Enjoy this fall season and come join us at the Hassayampa River Preserve!
See you there!**