

Scheduled Activities at the Park from October 1st – January 1st.

Interpretive Tours

begin November 1st and are offered free of charge Tuesday through Sunday at 10am. Please check in at the office prior to 10am. This one and 1/2 mile round-trip hike is an ideal way to discover the many wonders of the Sonoran Desert. Participants will learn interesting facts about the plants, animals, geology and history of the area. Wear comfortable outdoor clothing, hiking shoes, hat and sunscreen, and bring plenty of water.

Full Moon Hikes

Join Park Staff and Volunteers on a guided walk to Grandview area as the moon rises. This cool evening hike provides spectacular views of the moon, distant city lights and a unique perspective of the trail after sunset. This program covers approximately 1 1/2 miles and lasts about 1 1/2 hours. REGISTRATION is required and will begin one week prior to the date.

October 19th starting at 6:30pm

November 17th starting at 6:00pm

December 17th starting at 5:45 pm

Astronomy Evenings

Enjoy a beautiful desert evening with Park Volunteer Mark Johnston as he points out planets, stars, constellations and numerous other wonders of the solar system using his celestron telescope and laser pointer. This program takes place at the trailhead and is approximately 1 1/2 hours in duration.

REGISTRATION is required and will begin one week prior to the date. Everyone must be 8 years or older.



This Newsletter is published by the
 Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park.
 PMB 288 • 8711 E. Pinnacle Peak Road
 Scottsdale, AZ 85255

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Always On Stage...

By Diane McCoy-Berney

CACTUS WREN

"CHUG-CHUG-CHUG-CHUG-CHUG!" This is not the "song" of a nightingale. This rambunctious call is that of the cactus wren, a bird species that has attracted much notoriety long before it became Arizona's State Bird in 1931. Not only are they the largest of all North American wren species, cactus wrens are very entertaining to observe as they go about their day-to-day business in an ever-active, efficient and attention-grabbing fashion.

One of the cactus wren's most intriguing behaviors is nest building. Their preferred Sonoran Desert nesting site is within the prickly, branching joints and spines of a most-avoided desert plant--the cholla cactus! The first nest built each year is an oval-shaped brooding nest, the size of a football. A small opening on the end of the nest serves as a narrow passageway to a surprisingly "comfy" abode, adequately lined with the softest of materials including feathers and hair. Winter and spring nest openings are placed to minimize the entry of cold drafts. Nests built during warmer months have openings placed to take advantage of cooling breezes. It would seem that these birds have been "going green" long before modern man started to build with energy efficiency in mind!

It takes about a week to complete a nest. In a whirlwind of activity, the male and female pair build the nest at the

female's chosen brooding site. Strands of grass and other flexible nesting materials are carefully tucked into place forming a barrier from the impaling cholla cactus spines! When the nest is ready, the hen will lay three to five pinkish spotted eggs. She continues to feather the nests interior until fledging occurs. Meanwhile, the male may construct additional nests within the territory. These secondary nests are referred to as "dummy" and "decoy" nests. They

Given the comfortable interior of the nest, it should

come as no surprise that the cactus wren is a late sleeper in comparison to other bird species. Not a follower of "the early bird gets the worm" adage, the cactus wren "sleeps in". Late rising is no hindrance to their active prodding, poking and turning of ground litter to uncover juicy insects! When the weather heats up, however, such foraging techniques take place in cooler, shadier areas of the wren's desert territory.

Size and amount of clutches per year are directly related to the amount of available food sources, primarily insects. Cactus wrens obtain almost all the moisture needed for survival from the food they consume,

making them ideally suited for life in the Sonoran Desert.

The cactus wren is not a shy, quiet bird. Its calls are boisterous and brash. In addition to "CHUG-CHUG-CHUG", other repertoires include, "CHIT-CHIT-CHIT", "BUZZ-ING" and even "GROWLING" during mating! Take heed all who hear their call! Vocalizations are designed to deliver important messages or to sound an alert when a coachwhip, gophersnake or other perceived danger is near.



VOLUNTEERS AT WORK



Although Pinnacle Peak Park is operated and staffed by the city of Scottsdale, it is truly the volunteers who keep the Park thriving as the wonderful destination spot it has become for locals and visitors over the past 11 years. Currently the park has approximately 60 active volunteers, devoting 50 or more hours a year. That is quite a bit of help! On any given visit to Pinnacle Peak Park, you may see a volunteer trail roving, sitting at the front desk, swearing in a new Jr. Trail Ranger, working with the trail crew on a Monday morning or after a storm, or leading a guided tour. You might even see all of these activities -- possibly all on the same day!

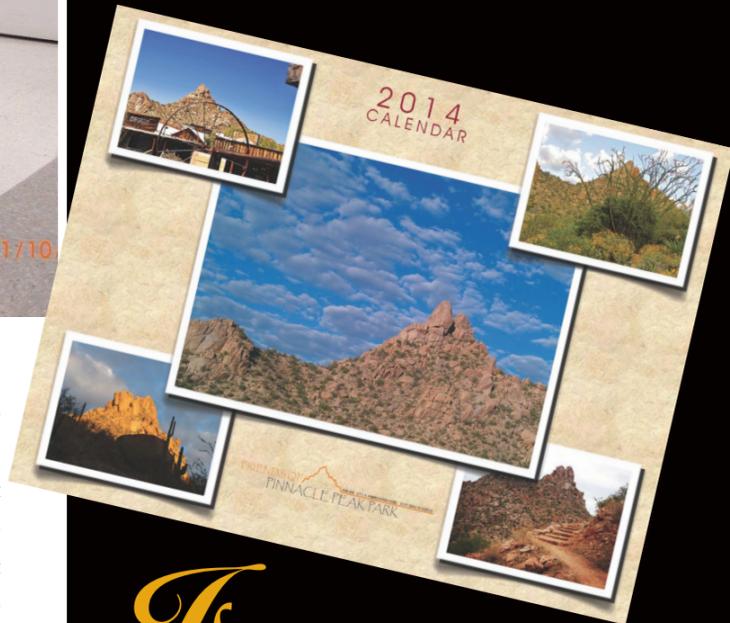
Our volunteers are well trained, and possess a true passion for Pinnacle Peak and the Sonoran Desert. They are always willing to share their knowledge about the native flora, fauna, geology and local history. They might even be able to assist with the nearest pizza spot recommendation, post hike!

Besides the advantages to the Park, research suggests volunteering provides benefits to the volunteers themselves. It has been shown that people who volunteer live longer, and enjoy improved mental and emotional health and well-being, as well as richer social connections.

We truly appreciate our dedicated, knowledgeable and resourceful volunteer force. We couldn't do it without them!



2014 Pinnacle Peak Calendars coming soon....



If you have not seen one of our 2012 or 2013 Pinnacle Peak Park calendars, you are missing a visual feast of the many sights and wonders of our favorite local landmark.

Each year we encourage Pinnacle Peak Park patrons, volunteers and staff to submit their best photos of all things Pinnacle Peak. Eligible photos are those that are taken OF, FROM or AT the Park. With nearly 700 photos submitted for this 2014 calendar it is both a challenge to select the best ones and a testament to the beauty and wonder of this iconic Peak!

We expect the 2014 calendars to be available in early November so mark your calendar. Also plan to stop by the Park on Thanksgiving Weekend where members of the Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park will be on-site selling these unique limited edition calendars. Please support your Park by purchasing a 2014 calendar for \$10—cash only. We know you'll want one for yourself and they also make wonderful holiday gifts!

Jingle Hike to Santa

Enjoy a Ho-Ho-Ho-hike and a trail side visit with the jolly old guy himself! Children must be accompanied by a registered adult who will also be on the trail with them. The hike is a self-paced one mile round-trip hike and the trail is steep in several sections, so little legs need extra time. No strollers or bikes allowed. A seasonal craft activity will be provided at the trailhead. This is an event that you must pre-register for. The park does



not take registrations. The registration fee is PER family. There are several time slots to choose from for this event and limited numbers for each time. TO REGISTER: Call 480-312-7957 or log on to www.scottsdaleAZ.gov, click on Parks and Recreation link, and then click on Recreation Classes.

Wildlife Programs

Starting in October, the park will occasionally host weekend wildlife programs. Liberty Wildlife and Southwest Wildlife will host these educational programs in



the ramada at the trail-head. Both of these organizations are rehabilitation centers that care for injured or abandoned animals. Please check the park website at www.scottsdaleAz.gov/parks/pinnacle for the latest and most up to date information about programs and times or call the park at 480-312-0990.

Even though it will have already happened by the time the newsletter has been printed...

Thanks to all the Eagle Scouts

Starting before Pinnacle Peak opened to the public in April 2002, Boy Scouts working to achieve their Eagle Scout badge have sought out Pinnacle Peak Park to do their project. Most have been trail maintenance projects, but others have contributed by building trail erosion structures, reducing fire danger by removing fire fuels, and eradicating non-native plant species. There have been over 65 Eagle Scout projects in the last 13 years that have given over 5400 hours of labor at a cost value of \$110,000!

The Friends funded a plaque that list every Eagle Scout, Troop Number and date of his project. This beautifully designed plaque, made by Mountain States Specialties, has been placed on the northwest corner of the ramada.

About The Friends of Pinnacle Peak Non-Profit 501c3

This organization is dedicated to assist in maintaining the wonderful character of Pinnacle Peak Park, which is enjoyed annually by over 200,000 visitors.

The goals and objectives of the Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park, is three-fold.

The first and foremost of these is the education of our visitors! This is accomplished through the publication and distribution of a newsletter, and the financing of the on-site demonstrations that the park provides by local animal and wildlife organizations.

The second of these goals and objectives is through the cultivation of the Park's volunteers. To streamline this, The Friends provide support for new volunteer education and

training, as well as fostering continuing education opportunities for the seasoned volunteers.

The third of this three-fold list is to provide the funding for future park improvements. This is proving to be the most costly, but the ideas and plans that are in the works will enhance this special Scottsdale gem further!

If you would like to contribute a tax deductible donation to supporting the mission of the Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park, please send it to:

Friends of Pinnacle Park Park

PMB 288

8711 E. Pinnacle Peak Road • Scottsdale, AZ 85255

The website is: www.pinnaclepeakpark.com