

Friends of PINNACLE PEAK PARK Newsletter

Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park • PMB 288, 8711 E. Pinnacle Peak Road • Scottsdale AZ 85255 • www.pinnaclepeakpark.com

White Nosed Coati

By Challie Facemire

The White Nosed Coati (*Nasua narica*) while common in Central America is a less common sight in the US. This small animal can live in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. They can be found through Mexico (with the exception of the central Sierra Madres and the Baja Peninsula), Central America through Panama, and into South America West of the Andes.

These small creatures are a lot like raccoons. They generally measure between 2-4 ft. long, the females are considerably smaller than the males, and half of their body length is in their tail. They adapt easily to a human presence and thus they will happily go through your trash looking for food. However, unlike raccoons they are not naturally nocturnal. They are out and about during the day with their most active hours happening early in the morning or late at night. That said, they would become nocturnal if it means that they will have an easier time finding food.

Usually when Coatis are spotted they are alone. Adult males are solitary, and all Coatis forage on their own. However, females and juvenile males form social groups. They communicate with one another through vocal signals and they spend time grooming themselves

and each other with their teeth and claws. When the older Coatis go off to forage the young cubs are left with a pair of babysitters, they practice the same habits as meerkats have with their young.

Coatis generally eat a wide variety of food. They will eat small vertebrates, fruits, insects, eggs, lizards, snakes, nuts, carrion, and prickly pear. Generally, they get their food through foraging. This is why, despite the fact that they are adept climbers (they use their tail for balance much like a squirrel), they spend most of their time on the ground. It is where they find their food unless there is a fruit or nut tree around. They do, however, tend to sleep in trees as it is safer for them than sleeping on the ground. This is largely due to their natural predators. These include boas, raptors, and hunting cats.

The most threatening of the Coati predators are humans. While they are not considered endangered every-



Photo: <http://www.desertusa.com/animals/coatimundi.html>

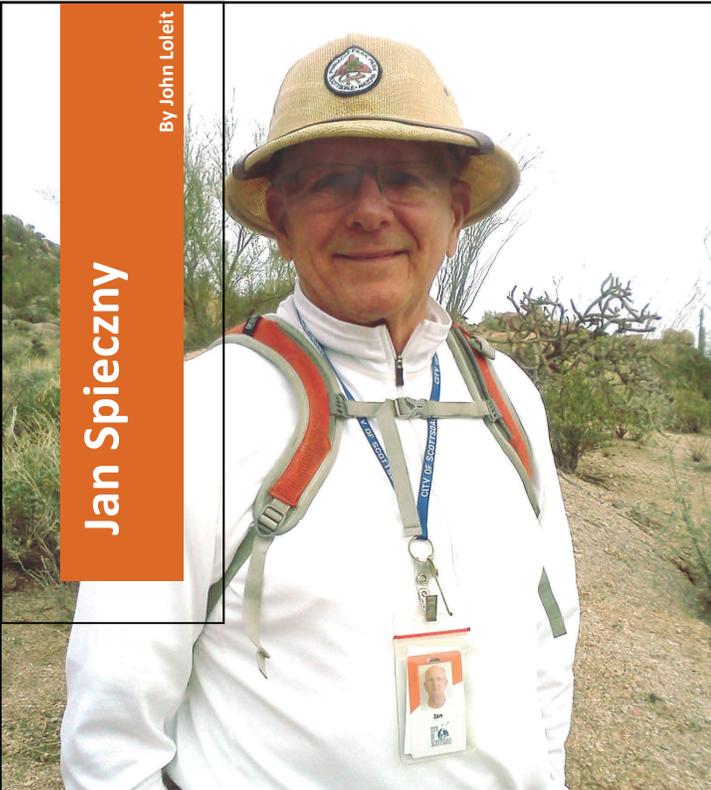
where, they have been given total legal protection in New Mexico. Arizona (where most of the Coatis that live in the US reside) they are free for year round hunting. The Coati are threatened by several human factors. There has been large-scale habitat loss and hunting in some areas. There is also the problem that the coati population in the US is becoming less isolated genetically from the southern populations. It is believed that the situation in Mexico is the cause of this problem. They are also victims of hunting, being caught in traps left for other animals, and "predator" control campaigns. In New Mexico they disappeared from the Burro Mountains at about the same time as the coyote poisoning campaign. They also fall victim to canine distemper and rabies.

While these animals are theoretically common in Arizona, it is still a rare treat to see one. Recently one was spotted in the vicinity of The Park by one of the regular hikers. If you show up early in the morning, and keep a good watch,



By John Loleit

Jan Spieczny



Jan has been a volunteer at Pinnacle Peak Park for 5 years and has brought his artistic talent and valued customer service skills with him. His colored pencil drawings of local birds have been used in the Parks 10th Anniversary commemorative poster and bandana. Each Tuesday and Thursday mornings after roving the trail, you'll find Jan standing outside the office engaged with hikers discussing the trail or answering questions about the park. His EMT skills have been beneficial at various times at the Park. His enthusiasm for volunteering and his ability to work closely with visitors earned him the Volunteer of the Year award in 2012!

Before moving to Scottsdale Jan was founder and President of the national design firm Design Dynamics/Exhibits located in Denver, Colorado. Hiking Pinnacle Peak comes naturally to Jan. He first started hiking the White Mountains in New Hampshire as an Eagle Scout. He has summited all 54 of Colorado's 14,000' peaks. In addition he has climbed Kilimanjaro in Africa, Mount Cook in New Zealand, and Ama Dablam in Nepal. With the mountain air in his blood, he spent 25 summers in the European Alps climbing Mount Blanc, the Matterhorn, and was second American to traverse the Eiger!

On the less risky side of life, Jan was a scout for the National Hockey League's Chicago Blackhawks for 20 years. His love of hockey still keeps Jan on the ice, playing on a recreational hockey team.

Jan has been married for 50 years to his wife Cecile, and together they spend 8 months in Scottsdale and 4 months on Nantucket Island every year. They are usually with their five grandchildren. His bird drawings also include Eastern Shore birds. The Nantucket Whaling Museum and several galleries proudly show his work. If you see Jan please thank him for all of his hard work. We appreciate all that you do Jan and are grateful to have you as a volunteer and friend.

Come Celebrate Pinnacle Peak's 12th Birthday At the Annual Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser

By Brian Carson

Come help us celebrate Pinnacle Peak Park's 12th Birthday.

The non-profit organization Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park invites all of our friends, families, and the community to celebrate on Saturday April 5, 2014, with an old-fashioned pancake breakfast from 7:00 to 11:00 AM on the west patio of the Pinnacle Peak Patio Steakhouse & Microbrewery at 10426 East Jomax Road (Pinnacle Peak Parks' neighbor to the East).

The Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park, with the help of Pinnacle Peak Patio, will serve up freshly made pancakes, sausage, fresh fruit, and beverages. The meager cost for this great breakfast will be \$10.00 for adults and \$5.00 for children 12 and under.

For more information about the Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser, and to purchase your tickets, visit www.pinnaclepeakpark.com

The President of Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park, Paul Diefenderfer, is elated about the event; "We look forward to celebrating Pinnacle Peak Park's twelve dynamic years of existence. Our efforts would not be possible without the commitment of time and resources from our local community and friends who love The Park as much as we do. We want to preserve and enhance it for our current and future generations."

This fundraising event will help support the Friends' proposed capital improvement campaign. Improvement projects that will be taking place in the near future at the Park include the following: information kiosks, new benches with additional seating elements, and enhanced interpretative signage. We will also be working toward an expanded enclosed storage area to the south of the current Office area. One of our long awaited projects, the new entry steps into the Ramada, is now complete.

The Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park is a group of local residents tasked with the mission to assist in maintaining the character of the Park, and to support improvements and educational activities through fundraising efforts. The Friends of Pinnacle Peak (a non-profit organization separate from the City of Scottsdale) was established to accept donations for Park programs, preserve the Park, recognize volunteers, and host various educational activities.

Everyone is welcome to join us to celebrate our great Park. We will have a fun meal and great time!

See you there.

The Ragged Rockflower

By Yvonne Massman



The winter rains this past November gave us a glimmer of hope that we might be in for a spectacular wild flower show when spring came around. However, our exceptionally warm winter temperatures this year sabotaged the brilliant display instead, and offered only a few flowers in a few locations. As the poor little wild flowers were sprouting the 70 and 80 degree days were working to drying them up.

Despite the warmer days one plant in particular, the Ragged Rockflower (*Crossosoma bigelovii*), did actually fulfill its wildflower contract this year by providing us with numerous bouquets along the Pinnacle Peak Trail. Of course, it too was affected by the warmer days and bloomed in the early part of January rather than its “typical” blooming season of late winter to early spring.

The Ragged Rockflower is native to Arizona. California and Nevada also have their own regional species. Although it is quite common in the proper habitat, this plant often goes un-noticed. This changes when the perennial shrub bursts into bloom. The extremely fragrant flowers that cascade down the end of the branches inspire even an inexperienced hiker to turn botanist; looking to the landscape in search of what might possibly be producing the intoxicating perfumed air.

This five petal flower is not one of the more showy flowers in bloom during wildflower season, but is one of the more pungent. The flower’s colors range from white to a purplish tinged white. Each petal is in the shape of a pointy teardrop, which surrounds a light yellow center.

The name “Rockflower” might give you a clue as to where this shrub chooses to anchor its roots. Chances are you will never locate it growing in flat desert terrain or the typical decomposed granite landscapes, but you are more likely to find it on the north facing side of a mountain or in a deep narrow canyon in the warmer regions of Arizona. The plants come straight out of a crevice or a narrow rock fissure. Some of the nicest specimens at Pinnacle Peak Park can be found just past the quarter mile marker on the east side of the peak, just at eye level on the trail.



Photo by: Jim Andre



Photo by: Jim Andre

The flowers for this season are gone, but why not take up the challenge to locate the shrub now on your next hike so that when the season rolls around next year you will be ready to see it in bloom. If that doesn’t work out and you don’t locate it along the trail here is a hint: there is a specimen plant and educational Ragged Rockflower plant sign located just above the one-mile marker along the trail.

Scheduled Activities at the Park from Dates - Dates

March 22nd – Liberty Wildlife from 9:00 am-12:00 pm

March 22nd – Astronomy Talk, 6:30pm, registration required starting 7 days prior to event. All participants must be 8 years or older. Sign up at the trail head or call 480-312-0990.

April 5th – Annual Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser 7:00 am-11:00am

April 14th – Full Moon hike, 6:30pm, registration required starting 7 days prior to event. Sign up at the trail head or call 480-312-0990.

April 26th – Cookout at MacDonald's Ranch **DATE CHANGE**

April 26th – PPP Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

April 26th – Astronomy Talk 6:30pm, registration required starting 7 days prior to event. All participants must be 8 years or older. Sign up at the trail head or call 480-312-0990.

May 18th – Astronomy Talk, 6:30pm, registration required starting 7 days prior to event. All participants must be 8 years or older. Sign up at the trail head or call 480-312-0990.



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

Send feedback and input to:
FPPEditor@gmail.com

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