

Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2025 Volume #43

The Great Horned Owl

By Maureen Eye

The Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*) is also known as the tiger owl or the hoot owl. Named for its distinctive eyebrow-like “horns” that are tufts of feathers called plumicorns. It is heavily built, with a barrel shaped body, a large head, broad wings and generally colored for camouflage. Its size can vary considerably across its range. The populations in Alaska and Ontario being the largest and populations in California and Texas being the smallest. Native to the Americas, it is an extremely adaptable bird with a vast range of territory. Primary diet is rabbits, hares, rats, mice and voles. It also freely hunts animals it can overtake including mid-sized mammals (domesticated cats and dogs as well) birds, reptiles and amphibians.

Great horned owls are primarily active at night and tend to roost wherever their foraging path ends at dawn. Typically, they are highly sedentary, capable of utilizing a single territory throughout maturity. The species was once thought to be strictly monogamous. However, recent discoveries have found males mating with two females simultaneously. Pairs (or threesomes!) usually breed together year after year and may mate for life. They will usually

select an existing nest of large size. Often the nest was made by another large raptor such as the Harris Hawk. As a rule, no owl species has ever been known to build its own nest. In our



Photo by Sheila Hansen

region, great horned can be found nesting in cacti including saguaros. The stage at which eggs are laid is variable across North America. In the Southwest, egg laying may begin in late Dec to early Feb. There are usually 2 eggs per

clutch. Incubation ranges an average of 33 days. The female does the incubation and rarely moves from the nest, while the male captures food to bring to her. The owlets at birth weigh approximately 1.2 oz and gain that amount daily for the first 4 weeks of life. Young owls move onto nearby branches at 6 weeks and start to fly about a week later. However, they are not usually competent fliers until 10-12 weeks. The offspring will often stay in their birth territory until the parents start to reproduce the next clutch.

Evolution of Mountain Rescue in Arizona

By Dave Rossi and Tom Eye

We are all grateful for first responders when in need of quick assistance because of medical emergency. But when that help is needed when climbing on the side of a mountain, special skills are required. That's where key groups come together with the needed technical skills. But first, a bit of history.



Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, members of the AMCRT and the Kachinas joined forces and became the Central Arizona Mountain Rescue Association (CAMRA). In the early 1970's, Sheriff Paul Blubaum asked CAMRA to be the official Technical Rescue Team (Posse) for Maricopa county and use the identity of MCSO – MR for all Sheriff's Office functions.

The Kachinas: In the mid 1940's, a group of veterans returned from WWII and formed a climbing community known as the Kachinas. They made many of the first ascents in and around Phoenix. Because of their expertise, the Kachinas were called upon to rescue those in need in the mountains and on the rocks.

The MCSO-MR Team remains the technical rescue service to the citizens of Maricopa County and Central Arizona. They will go anywhere, anytime, for anyone. They are committed to the improvement of Search and Rescue services to the community.

The Arizona Mountaineering Club: The Kachinas gave rise to the Arizona Mountaineering Club. This group established a formal committee under the name of the Arizona Mountaineering Club Rescue Team (AMCRT). By 1969, search and rescue was changing in the U.S. and becoming more formalized. With the encouragement of the

"Do What You Love, Love What You Do"

By The Staff at Pinnacle Peak Park

The staff at the Pinnacle Peak Park is proud to serve our community by keeping our trail and the entire park in top condition, while also dispensing exceptional customer service. From the Junior Ranger program to nature hikes to sunset/full moon treks to astronomy nights to wildlife discovery programs, we are always seeking new ways to enhance the visitor experience.

Introducing Pinnacle Peak Park staff:

Farshid Mehrdadfar (Far):

Number of years with the city: 7 years
Prior to employment with the city: Over 25 years in wildlife management & consultancy.
Far married his best friend Bridget and together they have had many adventures around the world. His work on Sand cat (*Felis margarita*) reproduction in captivity produced the first successful embryo transfer and live kittens in this species. Far's passions includes nature photography, wildlife behavior and interpreting them to the Pinnacle Peak Park guests.

Elizabeth Diethelm (E):

Number of years with the city: 2.75 years
Prior to employment with the city: Self-employed, freelance graphic designer.
I'm super proud of the fact that I have been the "Joke Elf" and Santa's helper for the Jingle Hike for 3 years straight. I enjoy interacting with all the volunteers, regular hikers and visitors from all over the world. I take great pride in remembering their names and stories.

***And, Introducing Katie Anders
the Natural Resources Supervisor at Pinnacle Peak Park!***

I've been with the City of Scottsdale off-and-on for the last 10 years in various full-time and part-time positions. I grew up in Scottsdale, where I went to Cheyenne Traditional School, Notre Dame Preparatory High School, and graduated from Arizona State with a degree in U.S. History and Parks and Protected Area Management. Currently, I live in Gilbert with my daughter Harper and our cocker spaniel puppy Colt. My favorite part of Pinnacle Peak Park is the people and the spectacular views of Scottsdale!



From left to right: John O'Neil, Gary Gribble, Dawn Reynolds, Elizabeth Diethelm, Len Sherman & Farshid Mehrdadfar

Dawn Reynolds:

Number of years with the city: 2.5 years
Prior to employment with the city: Human resources and benefit administration.
Dawn has raised 3 amazing children in Arizona and enjoys talking with kids about our Junior Ranger Program. Dawn loves spending time in nature and with her family.

Gary Gribble (GG):

Number of years with the city: 2.5 years
I've learned a lot about nature from my time here and have better respect for it now. I enjoy the people coming to the park, they are always happy and complimentary of how nice the trail is.

John O'Neil (JO):

Number of years with the city: 2 years
Prior to employment with the city: Hotel and restaurant management.
Achievement: John and his wife moved from Boston to Scottsdale in 1988, where they raised a son and daughter. John loves talking to hikers about our trails and the beautiful McDowell preserve.



Events and Activities:



Astronomy Evenings

Geology Adventure

Wildlife Discovery

Jingle Hike

Sunset/ Full Moon Hike

Thank you for the incredible support you've shown Pinnacle Peak Apparel so far! If you're not familiar with us yet, we offer a range of Pinnacle Peak clothing and accessories, and we've partnered with Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park, donating 10% of all sales to support their ongoing efforts at the park.

Mark your calendars for Sunday, March 9th! Join us at the park from 9 a.m. to noon, where we'll be showcasing samples of our clothing, hats, and water bottles. Plus, don't miss the opportunity to enter our giveaway! The prize package includes a Pinnacle Peak Apparel t-shirt, hat, water bottle, and, courtesy of Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park, their calendar and Wildflower and Butterfly Guide. We look forward to seeing you there! Wear the Peak, Support the Park!

Shop online at pinnaclepeakapparel.com

Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park

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Volunteer Opportunity

Do you want to be a steward and help protect our beautiful Sonoran Desert? Do you want to share your knowledge of our special environment? If yes, then Pinnacle Peak Park has a variety of volunteer opportunities available to you, including trail roving, trail sweeping, trail maintenance and visitor center attendant. Find more information and a volunteer application at City of Scottsdale- Pinnacle Peak Park Volunteers (scottsdaleaz.gov).

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