

Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park

NEWSLETTER

Fall 2023 Volume #40

Meet Stephanie Steinman, Pinnacle Peak Park Calendar Designer

By Katherine Romanow

The Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park's key fundraising effort for the last 15 years has been the creation and sale of an annual calendar. The funds generated by calendar sales go to support various activities in the park, including educational programs, volunteer training and recognition, newsletter production, and the development and maintenance of park facilities.

Stephanie Steinman, a dedicated volunteer, has played a pivotal role in the development of the calendar for the past three years. She is a commercial interior designer at LaBella Associates based in Rochester, New York, working primarily on educational spaces, ranging from K-12 to higher education. Stephanie specializes in creating renderings for these projects and has a strong background in various artistic mediums, including drawing, painting, ceramics, and even crochet. Notably, one of her significant achievements is illustrating her husband Justin Steinman's children book, "Land of Giants," and assisting with self-publication.

Stephanie's process for creating the Pinnacle Peak Park calendar involves carefully reviewing all submitted photos by

our park visitors, selecting suitable candidates for each month, and ensuring that the chosen images are of high resolution to avoid printing issues. She also aims to provide variety by avoiding similar shots and limiting each amateur photographer to one inclusion per calendar. Stephanie utilizes Adobe InDesign, a publication-focused software, to manually set up the calendar pages and incorporate important dates, such as Pinnacle Peak Park's schedule and holidays. The selected photos are inserted into the calendar, and proper credit is given to each photographer. To accommodate as many photographers as possible, additional photos highlighting park activities and wildlife are included in the back of the calendar.



Living with Mountain Lions in Arizona

By Lisa Levey

The grace and power of the mountain lion continues to be a standard symbol of strength and stealth. Due to the mountain lion's adaptability; including a fast and powerful muscular body, sharp eyesight and keen hearing, and their ability to swim, climb trees and jump long distances, this cat thrives in many varied habitats. In North America, mountain lions are found from the Rockies to the Pacific coast and from Canada through Mexico.

The mountain lion is a solitary animal with adults only meeting during mating season. Mothers and their kittens live in groups. Adult males average 2.0 to 2.7 feet tall to the shoulders with a nose to tail length of about 8 feet. They generally weigh between 115 to 160 pounds. Females are slightly smaller. Their primary coat color is "tawny", but can have reddish tones and light patches on its underbody. Kittens are born spotted with blue eyes and rings on their tails. With large paws and strong hind legs, mountain lions possess the ability for short powerful sprints. They can jump 18 feet vertically and up to 40 feet horizontally.

The Mountain Lion (*Puma concolor*) holds the Guinness World Record for having more names than any other living mammal. In the English language alone, it has over 40, including cougar, puma, panther, mountain cat, mountain screamer, painter and catamount (short for "cat-of-the-mountain"). As many as 29 sub-species or geographic races of the mountain lion are recognized and each of these has its own name as well; for example, there is the Yuma cougar, Colorado cougar and Florida panther. Although it is considered part of the small cat family, the mountain lion is the fourth largest wild cat in the world after the tiger, lion and jaguar. Strange, but unlike cats of its kind, a mountain lion cannot roar but similar to domestic cats, they do hiss, spit, growl, and even purr!

Mountain lions can be found throughout Arizona. The Arizona Mountain Lion has a wide and diverse habitat including high elevation forests,



Photo courtesy of Janice Kucynski

rimrock canyons and mountainous desert areas. It prefers dense underbrush and rocky areas which facilitate its ambush method of stalking or lying in wait for unsuspecting prey. Mountain lions are carnivores and will eat any animal it can catch. In Arizona, this includes deer, elk, antelope, bighorn sheep, wild horses and domestic cattle. It's interesting to note that other than humans, no animal preys upon the mountain lion.

With the expansion of urban areas in Arizona and elsewhere, the movements of the mountain lion sometimes overlap areas inhabited by people. Attacks on humans are rare, there have been accounts where attacks have resulted in human death. They do not recognize people as prey, but instances of attack are usually related to territorial conflicts or juveniles seeking their own territories after being separated from their mothers.

If you come across a mountain lion in the wild, do not corner or antagonize it. If you feel threatened, try to look menacing and larger than you actually are by maintaining intense eye contact, shout loudly but calmly and flare a jacket or sweater to make yourself look larger. Slowly back away, don't run in panic and do not play dead. If you find yourself being attacked, fight back with sticks, rocks and bare hands focusing on the mountain lion's sensitive spots like its eyes. Remember, a mountain lion attack is extremely rare. Just avoid antagonizing the animal and do not corner them. Give them plenty of room to leave the area without being threatened.

Astronomy at Pinnacle Peak Park

By Mark Johnston, NASA Solar System Ambassador and PPP volunteer

Mark has been leading astronomy programs at Pinnacle Peak Park since the mid 2000's. He had been a trail rover at the park and had mentioned that he was an avid astronomer, and might there be interest in doing an event with his telescope in the parking lot? Yes! Notice went up on the office window, and when the event came, there were almost 100 participants!

The event was modified to create a maximum capacity of 30 with a sign-up sheet, and limited the age to 8+. Due to cloud cover, no events are scheduled from July to mid September. As a result, monthly programs have run from late September to June for nearly 20 years.

When Covid hit, and people could no longer co-mingle, Mark decided to try a new technology called EAA (Electronically Assisted Astronomy). Here, you replace the eyepiece with an astronomy camera, and send the images to a PC where they are processed and

sent to a TV. The advantages are you get brighter color images, it's in focus for everyone, all can see it at the same time, it is easy to see for the very young and old, and is much more entertaining for the group. During Covid, people could stand apart and see the screen. For the last 3 years we have used EAA and never looked back.

Recently the sign up process was automated on the website, and it's often filled up within 3 hours of being posted. Mark has also run a few solar events with his dedicated solar telescope in the early mornings. Astronomy at Pinnacle Peak Park remains a free, popular and entertaining way to learn a bit about the sky and see some things you've never seen before. You can learn more, see upcoming dates, and sign up at the website:

[https://
www.scottsdaleaz.gov/
parks/pinnacle-peak-park/
tours-and-events](https://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/parks/pinnacle-peak-park/tours-and-events)



The Arizona Monsoon

By Domenica Corbo and Sheila Wright

The word monsoon comes from the Arabic word "mausin" which means season. Since 2008, the established dates from the National Weather Service for our monsoon season are from June 15th through September 30th.

A shift in the wind direction from the south to the southeast occurs in the summer. The moisture from the Pacific Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico creates streams to the north. This, combined with the heat from the day in Arizona creates rising air (aka low pressure), setting the stage for that perfect monsoon.

The optimum temperature range for the creation of a monsoon storm is 100-108 degrees Fahrenheit, with 105 degrees ideal.

July is typically the rainiest month of the year in Phoenix, with about 1.05 inches of rain. Approximately 40-50 percent of our yearly precipitation falls during the monsoon season. On average, Phoenix sees 2.43 inches of rain each monsoon season. 2023 marked the latest start of the monsoon season on record with no measurable rain falling on the city's official measuring stations as of August 15.

The Navajo people call our summer monsoon downpours "male rains" because of their combination of thunderstorms, hail, flash floods and haboob. A haboob brings potential near hurricane force winds that stir up slow-moving dust storms on a massive scale, many miles long.

Pinnacle Peak Park Scheduled Activities*

Fri 9/22/23 7:00 -----Astronomy Evening
Fri 9/29/23 6:30-8:00 ----Full Moon Hike
Thur 10/12/23 6:30 -----Astronomy Evening
Sat 10/28/23 6:00-7:30 ----Full Moon Hike
Sat 10/28/23 10:00-12:00 -Phoenix Herpetological
Sun 11/12/23 6:00 -----Astronomy Evening
Sat 11/18/23 10:00-12:00 -Liberty Wildlife

Mon 11/27/23 5:30-7:00 ----Full Moon Hike
Sun 12/10/23 6:00 -----Astronomy Evening
Wed 12/27/23 5:30-7:00 ----Full Moon Hike
Sat 2/10/23 10:00-12:00 --Phoenix Herpetological
Sat 2/17/23 10:00-12:00 --Liberty Wildlife
Sat 2/24/23 10:00-12:00 --Wild At Heart

* New this Year! Online Registration

Please go to Recreation.Scottsdaleaz.gov. Registration begins 7 days prior to the Full Moon and Sunset hikes and 14 days prior to the Astronomy Evening. Please call the Park Visitor Center for details (480) 312-0990



Jingle Hike to Santa
at Pinnacle Peak Park

Saturday, Dec. 9
2 Time Slots: 9, 10 am

Put on your best holiday outfit, grab the kids and head to Pinnacle Peak Park for a morning of festivities and cheer the whole family will enjoy!

Registration begins Saturday, Oct. 14
Recreation.ScottsdaleAZ.gov
Space is limited to 180 people per time slot.

FREE EVENT!

Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park

PMB 288

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www.foppp.com

Volunteer Opportunities

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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