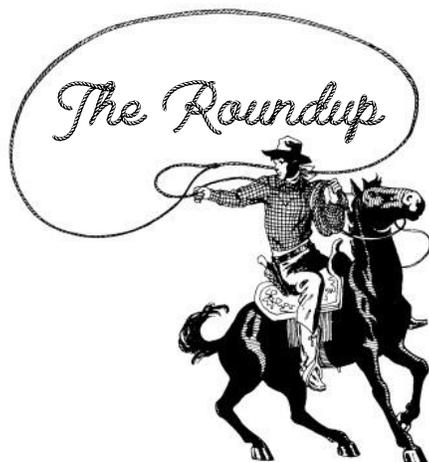




February 2021



RVHA Board of Directors:

Carmela Lizzo .. President
Linda Vinson .. Vice President
Jenny Powers .. Secretary
Judy Riley .. Treasurer

Directors:

Lori Bridwell Terry Holmes-Stecyk
Kim Edwards Ruth Kaplan
Randy Goettsche

To contact the board email info@rvha.us

Mission Statement: The Rio Verde Horsemen's Association is dedicated to protecting all horse properties, large and small facilities alike, and preserving horse privileges along with our rural lifestyle. The Association is committed to uniting our horse community in working toward these goals. Membership is open to all, horse owners and non-horse owners alike, who support our purpose. We are not a Homeowners Association; we do not restrict, regulate or police.

Message from the President

As a longtime resident of the Rio Verde Foothills (before it was named the Foothills!) and member of the RVHA, I am honored and excited to become the new President of our association. I, like many of you, have seen a lot of changes in the last 20 years. What we've gained are more paved roads, more homes, more invasive plant species, more traffic, a Fire Station, a Verizon tower, the northern trails of the Scottsdale Sonoran Preserve, the FAST text alert and of course, more people who have moved out here from the city. What we've lost are landmarks like Greasewood Flats, the telephone tree, grazing cattle on our properties, darker night skies, RVHA social events (thanks Covid), unobstructed views, 4H, motorcycles in the Preserve, and neighbors who have moved back to the city. But what I hope always remains is a sense of community, a commitment to our rural lifestyle and the realization that our little piece of paradise is truly unique, incredibly special and worth protecting at all costs. I hope that this year sees an increase in membership, which will help us gain momentum and a voice at the County level, which will help to keep the Foothills rural. I also hope to make sure that the RVHA stays pertinent and a valuable asset to our area, that our social events can continue and be a huge part of fostering connection and community and that above all, we stand united and supportive to each other and to our neighbors. I'm here to work for you, our members, so please don't hesitate to reach out with suggestions, comments, ideas, or anything you'd like to share to make the RVHA bigger and better. Carmela@rvha.us



Carmela Lizzo

Letter from the outgoing President

It has been my privilege to be the RVHA president over these last years. Serving this community is a passion of mine and I will remain on the board to help continue our efforts to fulfill the mission of the organization. Now, as per the bylaws, it's time to turn the reins over to a new president. I wish Carmela the best as she leads the organization through these continued months of the COVID pandemic and challenges facing our community. Her strong connections will be an asset as we continue to gather information to share with the membership.

Thank you for all your kind words of appreciation and support through these years. I'll still be only an email or call away.

Terry Holmes-Stecyk



For Heavenly's Sake... From Ski Bunny to Sanctuary Honey

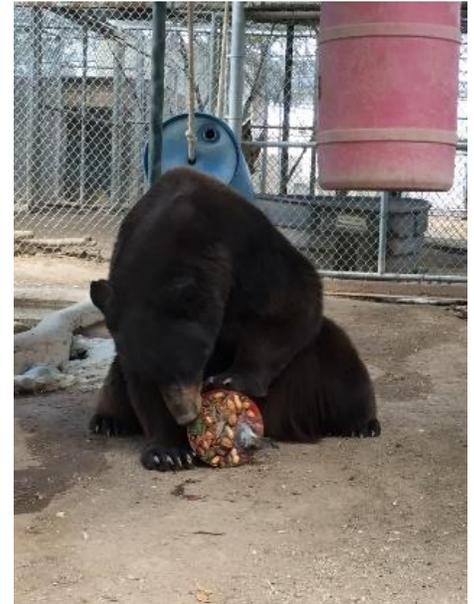
Heavenly had a rough start in life. We're not sure how he lost his mother, but without one to teach him foraging skills, he was left to make it on his own, through a long cold winter near the Heavenly Ski Resort in Lake Tahoe, California. FYI black bear cubs stay with their mothers for up to 17 months. Heavenly was found in March 2013, estimated to be a yearling, he weighed only 49 lbs. when he should have weighed twice that!

Heavenly was nursed back to health, by Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care. After many weeks, a fat and healthy bear was released that May, twenty-five miles south of Lake Tahoe. Unfortunately, within just a short period of time, he was spotted around the area of the ski resort again, approaching people for food. Now considered a "nuisance" bear (could pose a danger to humans) Heavenly would not be given a second chance at freedom.

Thanks to the Bear League, The American Sanctuary Association (ASA) and the co-operation of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, arrangements were made to transport Heavenly to Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center. When Heavenly first arrived, he was a "California blonde" and for a "black" bear it seemed confusing. However, black bears come in more colors than any other North American mammal, including black, brown, cinnamon, blonde, blue-gray and even white.

These days you can find Heavenly on our tour route, and our little boy above looks nothing like the confident, charismatic gentleman you will find today!





Did we mention smart? For medical purposes, we are training many of our sanctuary animals to voluntarily participate in their own care. Our ultimate goal is less stress for both the animals and their caregivers. Heavenly can shift from one enclosure to another, sit, lie down, stand-up, open his mouth (so we can check for dental issues) and is almost at the point where we can do a blood draw, all without sedation!

If you haven't been to Southwest Wildlife, or not for a long time, come and see what Heavenly is up to...for Heavenly's sake.

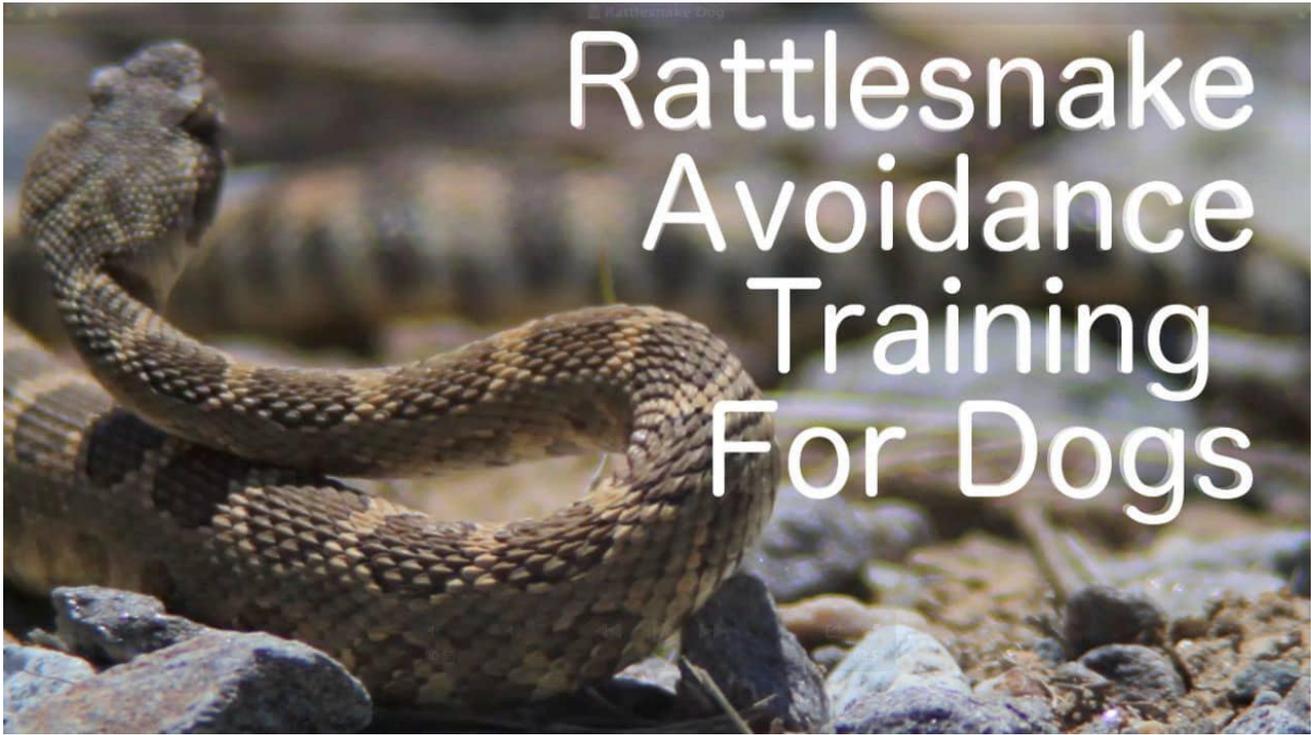
Listen and Read Along Virtually with Miniature Horses and Donkey

Reading a book aloud to a child stimulates their imagination and expands their understanding of the world. It helps them develop language and listening skills and prepares them to understand the written word. Even after a child learns to read by themselves, it's still important for you to read aloud together. Reading aloud to a child is truly the single-most important activity for building understanding and skills essential for reading success that a child will carry with them all throughout their life.

Tender Little Hearts Mini Tales has recorded a selection of books that you and your child can listen to and read along with the Mini Tales equine reading friends, Mazy, Dolly and Boone. They hope they will inspire your child and cultivate a lifelong love of reading. Reading is the key for lifelong learning, and if you can instill a love of reading at an early age, then a commitment to lifelong learning is sure to follow.

Visit: <https://www.tenderlittlehearts.org/virtual-listen-and-read-along.html>





Our dogs went through Willow's training and I can't recommend it highly enough. It can mean the difference between an emergency trip to the vet with a dog that might not make it through and one that will simply alert you to the danger.

Linda Vinson

Membership will pay for itself if you have your dogs trained to avoid snakes!

For dogs who live in the desert, learning to stay away from our most common rattlesnake, the Western Diamondback, is very important to avoid a painful experience or a potentially deadly outcome.

RVHA has secured two dates for rattlesnake avoidance classes with Willow Raven. Willow has been involved in training dogs for over 16 years in scent detection, obedience and to avoid snakes.

Dates are: March 6th and 7th from 8 am – 4 pm.

The local address will be given to all participants who sign up. Live rattlesnakes are used inside of a cage. For more information you can go to her website, <https://www.avoidrattlers.com/>

RVHA members - \$60 per dog

Non-Members - \$90 per dog

You will have the option to join before the training to take advantage of the savings.

To sign up for your session, please call Terry on 602-324-7099

Or email terry@rvha.us

Membership Reminder

If you haven't renewed your RVHA membership for 2021, now is the time! The board has reduced the cost of membership by 50% for this year. To renew go to: https://www.rvha-az.com/RVHA_app.htm

Globe chamomile, a pretty but deadly flower

By Linda Vinson



Globe chamomile may look like a pretty, yellow flower, but it is an invasive weed that poses a deadly fire risk in the Sonoran Desert.

Globe Chamomile may sound like something you would find in a lovely, steaming cup of tea, but don't be deceived. It is an invasive weed, is also referred to as Stinknet because of the vile smell that emanates from its lacey leaves and causes severe allergy problems. Regrettably, the smell is not the only problem with this weed.

Because Globe Chamomile is so prolific, in the last few years it has infested the north east valley, and this "cute" flower has taken over yards, parks, medians, open desert spaces, and any other inch of soil it can lay root in. The blanket of yellow will eventually dry out with the warm weather, leaving behind an abundant fire fuel in its place. When this weed burns, it produces clouds of toxic smoke.

You can be proactive in preventing stinknet by applying pre-emergent. The pre-emergent stops the plant's seed from germinating, preventing it from blooming and spreading the *hundreds* of seeds present in *each flower*; which proliferates the infestation. Pre-emergent is more effective if it is applied regularly year after year.

A pre-emergent is your best friend in dealing with weeds as they do not typically kill established, native plants, but rather it stops seeds from germinating. There are many different types and brands of pre-emergents, and it is best for you to speak with a landscaper or pest control professionals about the best option for your property. It is important to apply the pre-emergent now, or as soon as possible before the Globe Chamomile blooms.

You can put pre-emergent down anytime of the year, but the key to achieving the best results is to ensure that it is properly watered in, or apply it 24-hours before at least an inch of rain occurs. The effectiveness of the pre-emergent lasts approximately six months and should be applied to properties two to three times a year.

If you are unable to stop Globe Chamomile from blooming and spreading on your property this spring, it is recommended that you manually remove the weed by mowing it down or pulling it to reduce fire risks this season.



Roadside Cleanup

By Randy Goettsche

Until Cleanup events can occur again, here are a few details from past events:

Typical collection:

15 large trash bags

Largest items:

60" TV box,

10' steel tubing

Most numerous:

*water bottles and
cigarette butts*

Most unusual:

underwear

RVHA organizes a Roadside Cleanup of Rio Verde Dr from 136th St to 152nd St. RVHA is an approved volunteer organization by both the Scottsdale and Maricopa County ADOPT-A-ROAD programs. Scottsdale requires three cleanup events per year. Maricopa County requires two per year. By adhering to their standards, in return, Scottsdale and Maricopa County alternately dispose of the trash that is collected and provide some of the resources needed such as safety vests, gloves, litter grabbers, litter bags, and a set of portable caution signs. Typically, cleanups occur on even numbered months (Feb, Apr, Jun, Oct, Dec) except for Aug. Upcoming Cleanup events are publicized in the RVHA emails, RVHA website, Facebook - Rio Verde Foothills Bulletin Board, and NextDoor. RVHA wants to thank recent sponsors Sabrina Nelson, Bonnie Burke, RE/MAX Fine Properties; Monty Sparby, Western Ag Insurance, and Trilogy at Verde River who provide water and snacks for the volunteers. RVHA also thanks Sabrina Nelson and Randy Goettsche for organizing and running the events.

Like everything else, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the Roadside Cleanup activities. Even though it is an outdoor activity with lower likelihood of infectious spread, Scottsdale and the County have discouraged Cleanup events for the time being by discontinuing their trash pickup. RVHA has followed their guidance and will only hold Cleanup events when supported by Scottsdale or the county..



Alert System Proves Invaluable to Our Community

By Gull Saarup



FAST has quickly grown to well over 1,000 subscribers and adds many more after each incident that is reported, such as the recent single vehicle accident on 136th.



Information has become increasingly more essential over the years, but more importantly *accurate* information is often an issue when speed is favored. RVHA has created a system that eliminates the childhood game of telephone and provides accurate and timely information during emergencies to those that have subscribed to it. **Foothills Alert System Text (FAST)** was developed last year in an effort to provide exact and rapid information of emergency incidents that affect the community. The system was created and tested towards the end of May 2020 and proved extremely valuable when there was a small brush fire between Fountain Hills and Rio Verde on June 3rd. We were able to provide accurate information to residents that the three-acre brush fire on McDowell Mountain Road near milepost six and seven quickly grew to over a hundred acres. Residents on the Southside of Rio Verde Drive that bordered the park might have needed to be evacuated. We were able to provide that information instantly and provided continued updates to FAST subscribers. It was frightening to see that smoke from that brush fire, but accurate information provided by FAST brought comfort and allowed residents to prepare accordingly.

RVHA continues to improve the system to ensure the speed and accuracy of information. We use both citizen and official sources to make certain that the information provided by is precise. One of the main benefits about this system is that once you sign up, you do not have to do anything else. There are many apps out there that provide a broad amount of information, but it isn't always specific to your immediate area. You would have to check notifications or follow several other apps. FAST will notify you via a text message of any emergency which will allow you to activate your personal emergency plans.

FAST is not able to respond to incoming texts. If you need further information and updates, please check the RVHA Facebook page.

Sign up today at <https://www.rvha-az.com/rvha-alert.htm>, and make certain that you include the carrier of your phone, such as Verizon, AT&T, etc and be aware that data and messaging rates may apply. You **cannot** be added to the system if you do not include your carrier information.



With all the new homes that are sprouting up in Rio Verde Foothills, it seems a good time for a reminder about how precious our native plants are – and that some of them are protected under Arizona law.



Protected Arizona Native Plants

The following is an excerpt from the Arizona Department of Agriculture on how to properly handle protected native plants in Arizona. It's a good idea to make sure that you are in line with Arizona law when clearing your property.

For more information-including a listing of all the protected plants in Appendix A-please visit:
<https://agriculture.az.gov/plantsproduce/native-plants> .

“Nowhere in the United States are there more rare and unusual native plants than in Arizona. Most of them are many years old and cannot be replaced. Many people desire to use these "wonders of nature" in their landscaping. However, most of these plants are [protected by law\(link is external\)](#). Also, all land in the State of Arizona belongs to someone, whether it be a government agency or a private citizen. Plants cannot be removed from any lands without permission of the owner and a permit from the Department of Agriculture. Lessees of State or federal land must obtain specific authorization from the landlord agency to remove protected native plants.

Landowners' Rights

Landowners have the right to destroy or remove plants growing on their land, but 20 to 60 days prior to the destruction of any protected native plants, landowners are required to notify the Department. The landowner also has the right to sell or give away any plant growing on the land. However, protected native plants may not be legally possessed, taken or transported from the growing site without a permit from the Arizona Department of Agriculture.

Native Plant Laws and Rules | [View the native plant rules\(link is external\)](#) (on pages 41 - 51, starting with the section titled, "Appendix A. Protected Native Plants by Category" is the listing of protected native plants.) View the law by going to [Chapter 7.\(link is external\)](#)”

Emergency Preparedness

By Carmela Lizzo

The number one action that you can take to defend your home is to create defensible space!

1. Clear a 30 foot - 50-foot-wide space around your home, free from weeds and dry brush. Trim tree branches away from your home, remove wood piles.

2. Check fire extinguishers and add them to strategic locations around your property.

3. Keep fire tools handy - rake, axe, bucket, shovel, hose, fire extinguisher.

4. Do not forget your roof - sweep off any leaves, pollen, or other dry debris. One spark igniting dry pollen can set your roof on fire.

5. If you do not have a Rural Metro Fire Subscription, *please* consider getting one. If your house is on fire and you do not have a subscription, you will be sent a bill for their services (it is not inexpensive). You can schedule a property survey with one of the firefighters by calling Luther Moorhead at 480-606-3398. They will come out and do a visual inspection and assess the steps you can take to protect your property. Rural Metro also provides Emergency Services and Rattlesnake Removal.

6. Check with your insurance company to make sure that your policy is up to date and covers appropriate replacement value. Also check with them to see if they will process your claim without a Rural Metro subscription.

7. Drive alternate routes from your house so you are familiar with the area and possible escape roads/trails.

8. Make sure your address is visible from the road.

9. Take videos/pictures of your personal belongings or household item, along with valuables, back up the pictures/video to the cloud/Amazon Prime or your phone carrier.

All-Hazard Evacuation Steps: Ready, Set, Go

READY

Sign up for the Rio Verde Horseman's Association Emergency Alerts. Enter your phone number, name and carrier. Visit www.rvha-az.com and click on RVF alerts tab. You will receive a text in the event of fire, evacuation, road closures. On Facebook, join the following groups: RVHA, Arizona Foothills 911, Rio Verde Foothills Bulletin Board. These groups will give you up to the minute info on fires/emergencies/road closures

Download the website www.ein.az.gov for current emergency area information.

Make a family evacuation and communication plan that includes family phone numbers, out-of-town contacts and family meeting locations. Keep in mind physical distancing recommendations, wearing face coverings or other public health recommendations.



Recent fires have made it all too apparent that we need to be ready in case of emergency. Are you ready? Do you have a plan? Do you have a bag ready? If the answer to any of these questions is, "No." you need to read this article and make some preparations. NOW!



The SET alert might be the only notice you receive. Emergency services cannot guarantee they will be able to notify everyone if conditions deteriorate rapidly. Once you get the SET alert, be ready to GO!

Plan for livestock, they may need to be evacuated. Set up a relocation spot in advance. Make sure your horses will load into a trailer, as they may need to be left behind if they cannot load. Have a dog tag, small luggage tag or other ID (vet marker/write your number on their hoofs) ready to braid into their manes or tails. Note: Westworld is available in the event of an evacuation (depending on availability). All horses need current shots and health certificates. Current rates will apply.

Build an emergency go kit with enough food, water and necessary supplies for at least 72 hours. Include supplies to help keep you and your family healthy, such as face coverings, hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes. Start with the five Ps; **people and pet supplies, prescriptions, papers, personal needs and priceless items.**

Know your neighbors and check with them, family, friends and elders through video chats or phone calls to ensure they are READY.

SET

Be Alert! Residents should consider voluntarily relocating to a shelter or with family/friends outside the affected area. Residents should avoid close contact with those who are sick and should practice public health recommendations when relocating. Grab your emergency go kit. *This might be the only notice you receive. Emergency services cannot guarantee they will be able to notify everyone if conditions rapidly deteriorate.* **Be SET to GO.**

GO!

Evacuate! Danger in your area is imminent and life threatening. Residents should evacuate immediately to a shelter or with family/friends outside of the affected area. Residents should avoid close contact with those who are sick and should practice public health recommendations when relocating. Follow instructions from emergency personnel, stay on designated evacuation routes and avoid closed areas. **If you choose to ignore this advisement, you must understand emergency services may not be able to assist you further.**

Remember the 5 Ps of Evacuation

People and Pets and other animals/livestock and supplies.

Prescriptions with dosages, medicines, medical equipment, vision and hearing aids, batteries and power cords, face coverings, hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes.

Papers including important documents (hard copies and/or electronic copies saved on external hard drives or thumb drives), insurance papers, contacts.

Personal Needs including clothing, water, baby supplies, food, cash, credit cards, first aid kits, phones, and chargers (solar chargers), flashlights and extra batteries, bottled water, personal hygiene items, whistle, dust mask.

Priceless items including photos, irreplaceable mementos and other valuables.



Animals of the Sonoran Desert

By Animalsake

The Sonoran Desert is recorded as the hottest desert in North America, covering areas of Arizona, California, and parts of Mexico. It measures approximately 311,000 square kilometers and houses some of the most unique flora and fauna of the world. For example, the saguaro cactus is native to this desert, while the jaguar is one of the desert cats which is exclusively found in this region. Likewise, many other peculiar plants and animals thrive here irrespective of the extreme temperature conditions and presence of limited water. As compared to other desert biome, the Sonoran desert is more lush, which is mainly because of the bi-seasonal rainfall pattern. Consequently, the animal species inhabiting it are adapted to this yearly rainfall pattern. During seasonal rains, this area remains hot, which is a characteristic of all desert areas. Other factors that support the abundance of plant life in this desert is it's location and soil fertility. At present, advancement in the field of irrigation and water supply have also made it possible to yield vast agricultural lands in this desert. More than 2000 plants have been identified from here. The cactus plants along with those belonging to the legume and agave families are used as food by the desert inhabitants. While speaking about the fauna of this desert, there are approximately 350 birds, more than 100 reptiles, and 60 species of mammals. It is also found that 1000 bee species inhabit this desert and play a major role in pollinating flowers.



The animals and plants that reside here are evolved with special adaptive features which enable them to live and thrive in the harsh climatic conditions. The pronghorns and roadrunners can serve as an example to understand these adaptations. The former represents the fastest running mammals living in North America, whereas the latter are birds that run at a higher speed rather than flying as a means to conserve energy. Another adaptation worth mentioning is that of the kangaroo rat, a small mammal that can live it's entire life without drinking water.

The following is a list of native Arizona animals.

Cactus wren	Great horned, pygmy, elf and barn owls
Desert bighorn	Golden eagles
Anna's hummingbird	Gila woodpecker
Gamble's quail	White-winged dove
Big free-tailed bat	Red-tailed hawk
Roadrunner	Turkey vulture
Dragon fly	Black widow spider
Pepsis wasp	Tarantula
Bark scorpion	Palo Verde root borer beetle
Desert centipede	Sonoran toads
Kangaroo & Packrat	Ground squirrel
Antelope jackrabbit	Ringtail





- | | |
|--|--|
| Mud turtle | White-throated woodrat |
| Rosy boa | Desert tortoise |
| Arizona pocket mouse | Badger |
| Big brown bat | Black-tailed jackrabbit |
| Coyote | Great Plains, red spotted and Sonoran toad |
| Mountain Lion | Gray and Kit fox |
| Banded Gila monster | Western banded gecko |
| Desert horned, Flat-tail horned, long tailed brush, Clark's spiny, long-nose leopard, collared, tree, and Zebra tail lizards | |
| Javelina | Sonoran pronghorn antelopes |
| Desert iguana | Chuckwalla |
| Botta's pocket gopher | Cactus/Canyon mouse |
| Bobcat | Desert cottontail |
| Cave and California Myotis | Coati |
| Hoary, silver hair, Pallid bats | Mule Deer |
| Western skunk | Southern grasshopper |
| Pinacate cactus mouse | Townsend's big eared bat |
| Snakes: | |
| Lesser long-nosed | California leaf nosed |
| Mexican long-tongued | Common kingsnake |
| Sonoran shovelnose | Spotted leafnose |
| Coral | Blackneck garter |
| Banded sand | Longhorn |
| Glossy | Ground |
| Sonoran whipsnake | Sidewinder |
| Diamondback rattle snake | Blacktail rattle snake |



The Sonoran Desert is a tourist destination that attracts thousands of people every year, especially those who have a passion for wildlife conservation. It's diversity in animals makes it an interesting place to visit. Various resorts have been maintained for tourists who are interested in staying within the desert and exploring the varied plants and animals. With human intervention for developmental projects, habitat destruction is on the rise, which in turn is responsible for a decrease in the population of certain plant and animal species that reside here.



Scottsdale McDowell Sonoran Preserve Trailhead Update

Chart a Course!

Due to COVID-19 restrictions the Pathfinder stewards have not been active at the Preserve trailheads for the past year. Pathfinders greet visitors, answer questions, provide trail route suggestions and recommendations and offer advice. In their absence, the Pathfinder stewards interviewed hike, bike and equestrian patrol stewards for input on suggested routes from the trailheads based on length of time involved and level of difficulty. The information was compiled into new route suggestion panels recently installed at Lost Dog, Gateway, Tom's Thumb and Brown's Ranch trailheads. The Panels offer easy to follow color-coded suggestions for routes, maps and interesting features of each route along with a brief description of the terrain. Be sure to check these panels out on your next visit and try some of the suggested routes to add to your enjoyment of our lovely weather and the Preserve trails!

The Panels offer easy to follow color-coded suggestions for routes, maps and interesting features of each route along with a brief description of the terrain.

Pima/Dynamite Trailhead Construction Project

The construction of the trailhead at the intersection of Pima Road and Dynamite Boulevard is well underway. Amenities will include parking for 200 or more passenger vehicles and at least 12 horse trailers. Parking spaces will allow sufficient room for those with bike racks to unload bikes safely. Horse trailer parking is separated from regular parking and will include a separate trail access to avoid congestion around the trailhead buildings and parking lot. There will be hitching rails and a water trough, similar to those provided at Brown's Ranch. The trailhead also includes restrooms, a covered ramada and small educational amphitheater, interpretive, directional and regulatory signage, a small office and storage space separated from the restrooms by a breezeway, drinking fountains for people and dogs, and entrances at both Pima Road and Dynamite Boulevard with automated access control gates.

New trails are currently under construction. All trails will take off from a loop around the trailhead to avoid congestion starting out or returning to the facility. There will be bypasses and connector trails so trails can be accessed without coming all the way back to the trailhead to change trails. In addition, a new interpretive trail is being planned for this site. A significant amount of educational signage is planned for the entrance to promote safety and provide trail information with large maps available for route selection.



The official opening is targeted for August 2021. This trailhead is expected to be remarkably busy, but will somewhat take pressure off the Brown's Ranch trailhead. Hopefully, the Pathfinder stewards will be able to resume activity in September and provide additional information to this trailhead as well as the others in the system.

Remember, although it has been a dry season so far, please be respectful of the trails throughout the Preserve *and refrain from use when wet or muddy* to avoid leaving bike ruts or hoofprints on the surface of the trails.

*Please remember that the desert environment is fragile. To keep the trails in good shape, refrain from using the Preserve when the ground is wet or muddy. A good slogan to keep in mind is:
Don't bust the crust!*

Site Plan for the new Pima Dynamite Trailhead



UPCOMING EVENTS IN OUR AREA

Arizona Cutting Horse Show	February 24-28
Sun Circuit Quarter Horse Show	Feb 27-March 7
Carousel Charity Horse Show	March 10-14
Cactus Classis Reining	March 17-21
Scottsdale Spring Classic Hunter/Jumper Show	March 24-28
Barrel Racing Championships	March 24-28
Miniature Horse Festival and AZ Touch of Class	March 25-28
Southwest Specialties Horse and Mule Show	March 31-April 3
Appaloosa Western States Desert Classic	April 2-4
Arizona Dressage Spring Celebration	April 2-4
Arizona Cutting Horse Show	April 7-11

