



FRIENDS of SABINO CANYON

FALL 2019

## Hello Friends of Sabino Canyon,

**L**et me introduce myself, my name is Jim Dobbin and I took over as president in June of this year. First off, I'd like to thank Paul Marques and Sharon Vandergriff for their service as Board President and Secretary for the last three years. As my father used to say, "Always leave something in better shape than you found it," and both Paul and Sharon can say they achieved that goal. Friends of Sabino Canyon has done some great work in the Sabino Canyon Recreation Area and we are committed to continue that into the future. A little about myself, I moved here to Tucson in early 2018 to be close to family. I am a retired engineer from Microsoft having spent 20 plus years working on Microsoft.com, Windows Defender and Xbox teams. I look to bring my technical experience to Friends of Sabino Canyon and help the board leverage technology more. From using our web site and social media to communicate with our members to just modernizing day to day work by the board. We just completed a refresh to our website, and we will be hosting more content there in the coming months. Another project currently in the works is a long-range strategic plan for the organization that should guide Friends of Sabino Canyon well into the future.

Enough about me, let's talk about Sabino Canyon – If you haven't already heard, the new all-electric shuttle service kicked off November 9th. Dubbed the "Sabino Canyon Crawler" the electric shuttles seat up to 60 passengers and offer an enhanced interpretive program. Payment kiosks have been installed and have been working well. Advance payment for specific scheduled rides is now possible, and a website enabling the public to schedule and pay for rides prior to arriving just launched – Get your advance tickets at



<https://www.sabinocanyoncrawler.com>.

For more information on the shuttle project and our role in this change, be sure to look at the stories we have posted on our web site. [www.sabinocanyon.org](http://www.sabinocanyon.org).

As you may already know, probably the biggest threat to the Sabino Canyon recreation area and the Coronado National Forest is the infestation of invasive plants such as **Buffelgrass**. As the recent Mercer fire proved, Buffelgrass is a serious threat to the desert as we know it. While the Mercer fire only burned 25 acres, Buffelgrass allowed the fire to spread farther and burn much longer and hotter than it normally would. Friends of Sabino Canyon is looking to partner with the Forest Service to help address the invasive species in the Sabino Canyon recreation area. This is an ongoing problem that will take years to address and will require a large amount of financial resources to protect Sabino Canyon. Look for more information on Buffelgrass on our website and in upcoming emails to our members. Also, find us on Facebook where you can donate to Friends of Sabino Canyon to help fight the invasive plant problem.

As always, thank you for your continued support. If you have any questions or comments, feel free to reach out to me by email at [jim.dobbin@sabinocanyon.org](mailto:jim.dobbin@sabinocanyon.org). We have had great successes and we still have more work to do to preserve and protect and enhance Sabino Canyon. See you in the Canyon!



JIM DOBBIN

*President, Friends of Sabino Canyon*



# The RPC Rolls Out its New Sabino Canyon Crawler Electric Vehicles

by FOSC Partner Jim DeGroot, Deputy Director, Regional Transportation Authority, Regional Partnering Center



**A**fter starting “transition” service in mid-March, the RPC stepped things up by launching the Sabino Canyon Crawler service over Veterans Day weekend with RPC’s new fleet of all-electric vehicles.

The Regional Partnering Center, the local permit holder for the shuttle service at Sabino Canyon, will operate five 62-passenger, all-electric, open-air vehicles manufactured by Trams International in Southern California. The vehicles were acquired through the generous support of Tucson Electric Power, which also brought new underground power service to RPC’s onsite maintenance yard.

The environmental benefits of the new shuttle service are substantial and include the elimination of over 400,000 pounds of carbon monoxide annually from Sabino Canyon as well as the reduced noise from the professionally narrated audio tour. The audio tour, delivered by earbuds rather than loudspeakers on the electric shuttles, was produced with the help of the University of Arizona College of Science, Sabino Canyon Volunteer Naturalists and other topic experts. The audio is available in both English and Spanish.

## TICKET INFORMATION

Visit [www.SabinoCanyonCrawler.com](http://www.SabinoCanyonCrawler.com) to purchase your tickets and reserve your tour departure time online in advance of your arrival. Arriving at least a half hour in advance of your departure time is recommended to address any parking delay. You can also purchase same-day tickets on kiosks at the shuttle ticket office (credit, debit or exact cash fare) or at the Visitor Center.

The Sabino Canyon Crawler travels the Upper Sabino Canyon Route every half hour (Dec. 15 to April 30) beginning at 9:00 a.m. The last shuttle will leave at 4:00 p.m. Ticket prices are \$12.00 for adults, \$7.00 for children ages 3 to 12, and free for children under 3, and include complimentary earbuds.

For the Bear Canyon Route, with access to the Seven Falls trailhead, enclosed, gas-powered shuttles will leave on the quarter hour every 30 minutes beginning at 9:15 a.m., with the last shuttle leaving at 4:15 p.m. Ticket prices are \$6.00 for adults, \$4.00 for children ages 3 to 12, and free for children under 3.

*We look forward to seeing you and we hope that you enjoy the ride!*

## Thanks, RPC, from Friends of Sabino Canyon for your service in Sabino Canyon!

We at Friends of Sabino Canyon are delighted with the RPC's approach to serving the public in Sabino Canyon, going well beyond simply delivering tours and transportation. The RPC has equipped its vehicles with Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in backpacks that can be taken into the field to assist hikers in distress.

RPC has trained their drivers in basic first aid and in the use of the AEDs.

In addition, the RPC has coordinated with emergency services in assisting distressed hikers including the transportation of sick and injured hikers to be met by ambulance crews. The RPC reports that from April through September of 2019, they have transported 57 people who were in distress and requested transportation.

*FOSC's partnership with the RPC gives us so much to appreciate!*

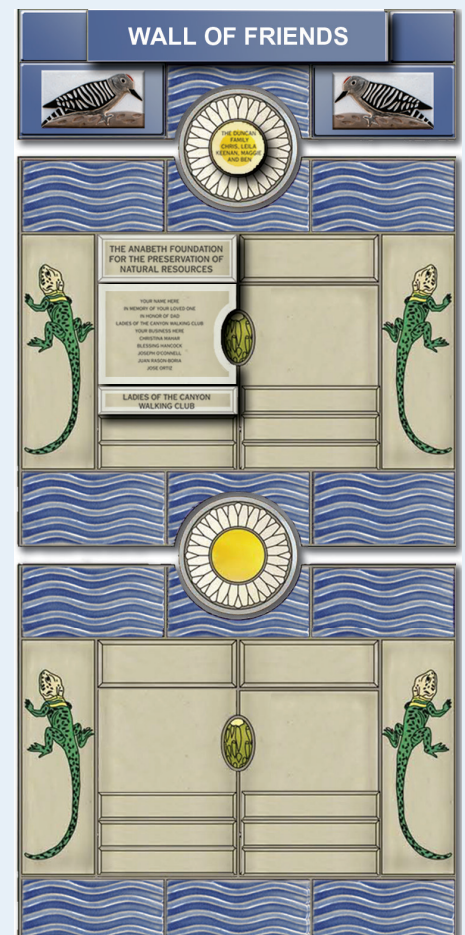
## Friends of Sabino Canyon Donor Recognition Program

The Wall of Friends Tile Art Tributes and Memorials near the Visitor Center at Sabino Canyon provides a perfect opportunity to honor a loved one or to show respect for a friend, relative, business, or organization deserving special recognition.

A donation to Friends of Sabino Canyon of \$500 or more qualifies for the creation of an original ceramic tile to be installed at the entrance ramada of the Visitor Center Plaza. Your support of Sabino Canyon could be the beginning of the perfect gift from you, a personalized tile art memorial tribute.

For more information, go to our web site [sabinocanyon.org](http://sabinocanyon.org) and learn more about the Donor Recognition Program that includes the Wall of Friends Fresco and the Leave a Legacy Fresco.

*Friends of Sabino Canyon is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.*





# Close Encounters with Nature

*Terry DeWald, FOSC board member, shares his experience on July 25, 2019, at his house near Sabino Canyon:*

**E**ach morning upon awakening I go to the upstairs deck adjoining our bedroom to check out the new day. Since the creek was dry that day, I first checked out our fountain, a small waterfall coming from the overflow of our artesian well. When I turned to look at it... I did a double take... then slowly walked backwards inside and sprinted downstairs to get my good camera, telling my wife Peggy not to go outside until I darted back upstairs. Then we both slowly crept out on the deck and I started taking photos of three mountain lions.

It looked like the classic shot you would see in Tanzania of lions drinking at a waterhole. They were extremely thirsty. I don't know how long they had been drinking before I first opened the door, but we watched them drink consistently for the next 45 to 60 seconds until one peeled away, but the other two kept on drinking for another minute or more.

Upon showing these shots to **Josh Taiz**, the wildlife biologist at Sabino Visitor Center, he concurred that the cat on the left was the mother and the other two were her twins, likely about a year and a half old. If you look carefully, you can see small dimple spots on the twins' coats attesting to their youth, compared to the darker and more consistent chestnut coat of the mature mother.

We could not believe they didn't notice us. They were perfectly lined up, like at the drive thru at an In-N-Out Burger with the intent of getting a cool and refreshing drink... and nothing was going to distract them. Josh said that a mature cougar needs one deer a week to survive, and that these three cats were killing as many as three to four deer each week. After the one twin strolled to the right and stretched, the mother caught sight of us and slowly went down into the creek bed. Once she got down to the sandy bottom she just plopped down and relaxed for another few minutes before all three of them slowly and silently went back into the desert.

We're having the grandkids over to spend the night soon. We are not going to be camping out in the backyard... at least not until the creek starts flowing again after the monsoons.





# Search and Rescue In and Around Sabino Canyon

by FOSC Partner Scott Clemans, SARA

**T**he Southern Arizona Rescue Association (SARA) was created in 1958 after the search for three lost boy scouts in the Santa Ritas. After the search, it became apparent that a resource was needed to respond to search and rescue incidents in a timely, coordinated manner. This need was answered by people with hiking backgrounds, by Civil Defense trained individuals, and by four-wheel drive enthusiasts with outdoor skills which could be applied to wilderness rescue.



In 1962 SARA became a member of the national Mountain Rescue Association (MRA). Our membership in the MRA requires periodic recertifications in search, technical rescue, and winter operations. Our membership enables SARA to aid other MRA teams in mutual aid calls requiring high standards of performance in all wilderness environments, from desert to alpine.



SARA is a member of the Search and Rescue Council (SARCI) in Pima County, a group of search and rescue resources including recovery divers, search dogs, and horse/mule mounted assets. Many search and rescue calls in the Tucson area involve more than one asset. We all work together to find and rescue those who need our help.



Search and Rescue is the responsibility of the Sheriff's Department in each county in Arizona. While SARA is a private, non-profit (501C3) organization, we partner primarily with the Pima County Sheriff's Department, through SARCI, on any search and rescue calls requiring our support. We also respond to help other counties and states, such as New Mexico, requiring more manpower or expertise.

SARA is active in outdoor safety education, giving talks to schools and groups who want to learn about safe hiking in the desert and mountains. Due to the increase in heat related rescues the last few years, we also talk to hikers at trailheads to help spread the word on hiking safely in the heat. This is a big part of our Preventative Search and Rescue (PSAR) effort over the last few years due to heat related deaths in the mountains. Our PSAR efforts seem to be working; the last two years have seen a decrease in heat related emergencies, especially on the Bear Canyon trail to Seven Falls.

As a partner member of the Friends of Sabino Canyon (FOSC), we work closely with the Santa Catalina Volunteer Patrol (SCVP) and with the Forest Service to suggest improvements for trail signs and trail maintenance with the goal of increasing safety and reducing search and rescue calls in problem areas. We have a long term commitment to Sabino Canyon, where our building is located, and where many of our calls begin. We want everyone to safely enjoy the Sabino Canyon area, because it is such an incredible asset for us all! Please hike safely.

*For more information on search and rescue in Pima County, or to schedule a talk, go to [www.sarci.org](http://www.sarci.org). There you will see partner groups and contact information for each.*

# The Sabino Canyon Volunteer Naturalists Share their Knowledge

by FOSC partner Phil Bentley, SCVN President, [www.sabinonaturalists.org](http://www.sabinonaturalists.org)

**T**he Sabino Canyon Volunteer Naturalists (SCVN) originated in 1977. Two Forest Service employees, **David Lazaroff** and **Bob Barncastle**, introduced an environmental education program for visitors in the Sabino Canyon. The two trained small groups of naturalists over the next few years.

By 1984 there were 30 members, and the non-profit organization Sabino Canyon Volunteer Naturalists was formed to focus on scheduling field trips for elementary school children from kindergarten to sixth grade. Since those early years, SCVN has grown in numbers and popularity among the school districts in Tucson and nearby communities and in its relationship with FOSC.



## SCVN TODAY

During the 2018-2019 school year, SCVN, now 160 naturalists strong, hosted more than 170 classes serving approximately 6,500 students and 2,000 teachers and parents. There is now a separate kindergarten morning field trip program on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays each week starting in October. A menu of programs is offered for grades 1 through 5 every weekday morning. Programs can accommodate up to 60 students per visit. Many of the schools taking advantage of the SCVN programs are federally designated Title One schools that cannot afford to pay for field trip buses, which makes them eligible for federal funding. Through several grants, including one from FOSC for \$5,000 and from our own funds, SCVN financed 76 Title One field trips.



In addition to helping with funding bus transportation, FOSC funded the building of seven ramadas in the two SCVN teaching areas. Shaded areas enhance the field trip experience.

## HIKES, WALKS, TALKS AND DISPLAYS

SCVN, through its Public Interpretation programs, hosted more than 10,000 Sabino Canyon visitors through a variety of scheduled programs conducted by SCVN volunteers. These programs include HIKES throughout Sabino Canyon and the Santa Catalinas, WALKS that focus on subjects such as geology, birds, plants, wild flowers, lizards and photography, TALKS on subjects ranging from mountain lions to Native American culture, and DISPLAYS in and around the Visitor Center highlighting the local wildlife and geology and Native American history. During the summer months, we transition some of these programs to the coolness of Mt. Lemmon.

*SCVN and FOSC are committed partners delivering a better experience and community involvement in Sabino Canyon. Join us in our efforts to support underfunded schools so that their students and teachers can benefit from field trips to Sabino Canyon. Your increased contributions to FOSC will make a big difference!*



# Santa Catalina Volunteer Patrol... At Your Service!

by FOSC partner Marty Horowitz, SCVP

**T**he Santa Catalina Volunteer Patrol (SCVP) is a partner organization of the Forest Service on the Santa Catalina Ranger District. SCVP members are uniformed representatives of the Forest Service whose primary mission is to promote visitor safety and ecologically responsible recreation in the National Forest.

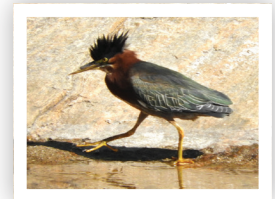
SCVP members patrol hiking trails across the entire ranger district, including Sabino Canyon, the Big Horn Sheep Management Area on Pusch Ridge, and the trail system on Mt Lemmon. There are currently about 250 members in SCVP; they volunteered about 25,000 hours this past year.

SCVP volunteers interact with visitors to provide assistance in planning safe hikes, awareness of wildlife risks and trail conditions — including monsoon awareness and the potential for flash floods, and “Leave No Trace Behind” outdoor recreation ethics. SCVP members also inform visitors about current Forest Service regulations and procedures concerning dogs, bicycles, drones, and weapons, and they report encounters with dangerous wildlife. Additionally, SCVP volunteers inform visitors about fire safety, including detailed limitations on cooking and campfires when Fire Restrictions are implemented across the district.

SCVP members also staff the Sabino Canyon and Palisades Visitor Center Information Desks. They provide bike patrols in Sabino Canyon, and they assist the Forest Service in doing light trail maintenance.

SCVP also supports monitoring mountain lions near teaching areas for the Sabino Canyon Volunteer Naturalists and they promote visitor awareness of year-round restrictions on dogs and seasonal hiking restrictions in the Big Horn Sheep Management Area.

SCVP patrollers are often first on the scene when hikers are injured, ill, or otherwise distressed. In these situations, patrollers facilitate communications through 911, provide limited first aid, and stabilize the scene until EMTs, Search and Rescue, and/or Pima County Sheriff's Office personnel arrive.



*SCVP volunteers are committed to enhancing and extending the visibility and effectiveness of the Forest Service throughout the Santa Catalina Ranger District.*



## FRIENDS OF SABINO CANYON

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Tucson, AZ 85750

### Voting Members of Friends of Sabino Canyon

FALL 2019

#### FOSC DIRECTORS

Josh Baylson	Paul Marques
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Jim Dobbins	Gretchen McFarren
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#### FOSC PARTNERS

**Jim DeGrood**, Regional Partnering Center  
**Scott Clemans**, Southern Arizona Rescue Association  
**Judith Peters**, Santa Catalina Volunteer Patrol  
**Phil Bentley**, Sabino Canyon Volunteer Naturalists

## Join Us in Support of Sabino Canyon!

A donation of \$25 or more registers you as a member of Friends of Sabino Canyon (FOSC) for one year.

Your contributions support our effort to work with the US Forest Service to protect, preserve, and enhance Sabino Canyon. Your contributions enhance funding for educational, ecological, and enhancement activities of our partners — Southern Arizona Rescue Association (SARA,) Sabino Canyon Volunteer Naturalists (SCVN,) Santa Catalina Volunteer Patrol (SCVP,) and the Regional Partnering Center (RPC.)

Sabino Canyon would not be such a vibrant and engaged community without you. We would also like to give a special nod to those of you who support our efforts through AmazonSmile and employer matched gifts.

Support Friends of Sabino Canyon  
whenever you shop.

**amazon**smile  
You shop. Amazon gives.

*We very much appreciate your contributions in support of Sabino Canyon which is so very special to all of us.*

If you'd like to update your contact information or advise us of your communication preferences, please email us at [donors@sabinocanyon.org](mailto:donors@sabinocanyon.org). Thanks!