

Friends of PINNACLE PEAK PARK Newsletter

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

Ironwood - Ostrya virginiana

By Challie Facemire

The desert ironwood tree, also known as a palo fierro (*Olneya tesota*), is a keystone species. It acts as a nurse plant for other flora and some fauna. This means it provides shade for plants growing around it, and shelter for local wildlife. This is usually true when the ironwood takes tree form. It is a versatile plant and can thrive as a multi trunked shrub (that generally doesn't exceed six feet high) or as a tree reaching up to forty nine feet.

The ironwood is not endangered, however it is slowly declining in numbers. It thrives in the Sonoran desert, and its habitat is slowly dwindling. Every year the numbers drop and eventually it may be a feature mainly in xeriscapes.



Photo by Leona Weinstein



Photo by Kathy Mascaro

Ironwoods are pollinated by only a few types of bees, which may also be contributing to their decline. The plight of bees is well known at this point, so we won't go into it here, but if the types of bees that pollinate ironwood trees die out then the trees will not be able to survive. Even keystone species rely on other members of their ecosystem.

The ironwood trees are very colorful across the year. In April their leaves turn yellow and drop, shortly after the trees flower. These flowers are purple and white, and stand out against the desert backdrop. The trees only flower for 10-18 days, so if you happen to catch the Pinnacle Peak tree in bloom you are quite lucky!

The next time you are at the park please visit our signature ironwood tree at the entry from the parking lot!



Photo by Yvonne Massman

New Volunteer: Paula Jones

By Kelly Hayes

Our annual volunteer training kicked off in October of last year and we were lucky enough to have a great turnout! Paula Jones was one of the volunteers that applied and attended this training. Before training had even finished, Paula was out at the Park learning and helping with the daily activities.

Paula comes to Pinnacle Peak with an interesting background and skillset. She spent nineteen years as a guide on raft trips in the Grand Canyon-if you have a moment, I'm sure she has some great stories to tell! She has previously volunteered for The Foothills Caring Corps where she assisted with serving homebound and disabled persons in the Carefree/Cave Creek area. She has spent some time volunteering with the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy assisting hikers with questions at various trailheads. Paula also regularly volunteers with the Maricopa County Emergency Communication Group providing ham radio communications at events throughout the state. In Paula's spare time she enjoys various hobbies such as: wood working, weaving, knitting, and kayaking.

Paula's hometown is Vineyard Haven, Massachusetts but she is happy to call Arizona home now. She shares her home with her adorable poodle, Toby. Toby enjoys hiking with Paula at various places in the state. Paula's favorite hikes in Arizona (besides PPP) include Brown's Ranch and hikes in the Prescott area.



Photo by Kelly Hayes



If Paula's interesting background and experience is not enough, you will be thoroughly impressed with her warm, genuine demeanor and her desire to truly help people become excited about the beautiful desert that we call home. Paula says that her favorite part of volunteering at Pinnacle Peak Park is being able to "talk to hikers about our wonderful desert." Next time you are at the Peak and see Paula, be sure to say hi. After a conversation with her, you will leave with an appreciation of our unique Sonoran Desert and perhaps an interesting Grand Canyon story!

New Construction

By Yvonne Massman

Since our last newsletter, there have been two really nice improvements to the park, thanks to the Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park, and your generous donations!

We have two new large concrete benches on each side of our signature saguaro, just outside of the office! One bench facing to the west provides a nice view of Pinnacle Peak, and the east facing bench, provides a wonderful view of the Four Peak Mountains!

The exposed storage area in the back of the building where we keep all of our tools and trail crew supplies is now enclosed! This feature has allowed us to just about double the space that we had before with moving the A/C unit to the outside of the structure, and eliminating the large metal toolbox which was located in the corner, and housed quite a set up for a resident packrat! We have been able to move the boxes and bins that were stored under every desk and in every corner in the office and reduce the safety hazard of stacking bin upon bin in the small back closet! All of our tools and supplies are now in a dry and safe place out of the sun also!

The next two projects that the Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park will be supporting that you will soon be seeing taking shape include



Photo by Yvonne Massman

a wildlife water area that we are calling a "Drinker" and a new kiosk which will be located between the ramada and the office!

The drinker is a joint project with an Eagle Scout and City staff. The kiosk is a project design by our architect Phil Weddle, with City staff creating and designing a variety of message panels that can be changed out to reflect the certain events that will be happening in a specific season! It's been a really fun endeavor for us all!

Thank you for your generous contributions to make all of these project possible, and for giving us the opportunity to enhance the experience of our visitors to the park!

P.S. Since we love all creatures large and small at the park, it's worth noting that the packrat has created a new home just behind the trash and recycle bins at the trailhead!

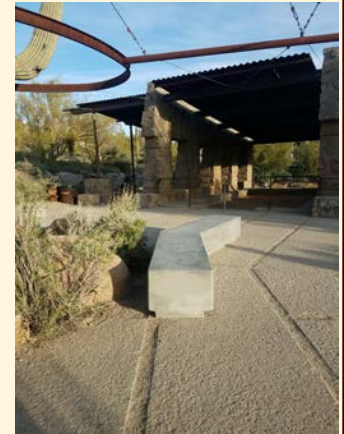


Photo by Yvonne Massman

Trail Runners

By Challie Facemire

We welcome all visitors to Pinnacle Peak Park, and love seeing people on the trail. However, there are some general etiquette rules that we would like visitors to observe. The walkers should get the right of way on the trail. They are not always able to get out of the way quickly, and trying to dodge runners can create a dangerous situation for everyone involved. So, we ask the runners to please be conscientious and to yield to the walkers. Walkers should stay in single file when others are approaching to alleviate trail congestion. We would like to create a safe and enjoyable environment for all visitors to Pinnacle Peak Park.

Scheduled Activities at the Park

03/31/2017 6:30PM-8PM Game & Fish
Program: Desert Tortoises

04/01/17 10AM-12PM Pat Rickard, flute
player

04/10/17 7:00PM Full Moon Hike

04/21/17 7:30PM Astronomy Night

04/23/17 10AM-12PM Liberty Wildlife

05/06/17 10AM-12PM Phoenix
Herpetology

05/10/17 7:30PM Full Moon Hike

05/16/17 8:00PM Astronomy Night

06/02/17 8:00PM Astronomy Night

06/09/17 7:45PM Full Moon Hike

07/09/17 8:00PM Full Moon Hike

08/07/17 7:30PM Full Moon Hike

09/06/17 7:00PM Full Moon Hike

09/22/17 6:45PM Astronomy Night

*Reservations are required for Game & Fish, Full Moon Hikes, & Astronomy Talks only, and can be made a week in advance. Astronomy Nights have a minimum age of 8 to attend. Please call the Park's main number at 480-312-0990 for more information, or to make your reservation. Pinnacle Peak Park is located at 26802 N. 102nd Way, Scottsdale 85262.



**This Newsletter is published by
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Send newsletter feedback and input to:
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