

Friends of PINNACLE PEAK PARK Newsletter

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

Raccoon

By Challie Facemire

The raccoon (*Procyon lotor*) is a common mammal across nearly all of the United States. Even in the desert there are raccoons (as can be seen in the “Wildlife Drinker” article). These cute, masked creatures are primarily nocturnal and can make a bit of a mess at night as they are naturally curious and will get into anything and everything.

Traditionally raccoons are thought to live in wooded areas with access to running water. However, raccoons are very adaptable and can live in nearly any human inhabited ecosystem. They will happily make their homes in sewers, barns, attics, sheds, and under porches. They can forage for food up to 18 miles, but when they live in suburban and urban areas they will happily raid trash cans for food and tend to stay within a one mile range of their home.

Raccoons are omnivores; meaning that they will eat pretty much anything they can get their little dexterous paws on. If they are living in the wild then raccoons like to eat fruits and invertebrates, the sweeter foods that are easy to find. If they are living in proximity to humans they will eat human foods or pet food (whatever is in your trash). Their favorite foods include nuts, snakes, frogs, insects, birds, fish and shellfish, eggs, and fruit. As you can see, there would be plenty of food around Pinnacle Peak Park for raccoons; both in the subdivision trash cans and in the park itself (where insects, snakes, frogs, birds, eggs, and some fruit are easily available).

Raccoons tend to live in small groups (usually around 4-5 adults) for protection against predators. When looking at the coyotes that usually roam the Pinnacle Peak Park area this makes a lot of sense. They usually give birth to kits in April or May and the mother can have anywhere from one to six at once. After twelve to fourteen months the kits will become independent and either stay with their community, start their own, or find a new community.

Aside from the masks raccoons are well known for their paws. They have enough dexterity to open jars, bottles, latches, and doors. They also have a habit of washing their food, which has shown up in many internet videos (a quick YouTube search will turn up thousands of results). Even their scientific name - *Procyon lotor* - involves washing, *lotor* means “washerman.” However, they aren’t actually washing their food. Even when water is not present, raccoons will make the same motions over their food. Scientists found that raccoons have as many nerve endings as

primates in their hands. So this touching of food actually is to increase the experience of eating the food and to figure out how to get it into their mouth. When the food is dunked or “washed” it actually increases the responsiveness of the nerves in the hand so they can better experience their meal and have a better understanding of what they are eating. This “washing” is also thought to be due to the fact that raccoons are often searching in nooks and crannies in water to find food, and since raccoons don’t have thumbs they have to roll the food around in both hands in order to better understand what it is.



By Ken Thomas



By Steve No Last Name



By BS Thurner Hof

Wildlife Drinker at Pinnacle Peak Park

By Yvonne Massman

Pinnacle Peak Park had a Wildlife Drinker installed this past spring! Now the wildlife of the area have a guaranteed water source, and the activity to the drinker has been busy!

Before installing the drinker, a representative from Game and Fish did an informal evaluation of the area to determine if placing a permanent water hole would be safe for the local wildlife.

There were criteria that needed to be assessed, to make sure that a drinker indeed would be beneficial for the wildlife and not put them into a harmful situation. The criteria were based on the location. Was it far enough removed from any busy streets? Was

the area a large enough open space so that animals would have a large range of sight to feel secure and comfortable?

Would the location provide them privacy from the park's visitor traffic? And, on the construction side, would it be close enough to be able to tie into the building water source without too much trenching involved? Yes, all of these were met!

The construction began in early April with the Friends of Pinnacle Peak Park covering the construction cost of \$4,200.00 for the infrastructure. The structure was then created and installed by a Boy Scout named Andrew Marquette, and members of his troop 201 on April 28th. Staff placed a "Game Camera" in the vicinity in June, and we have been keeping tabs on our visitors both day and night ever since. It's been a really great addition to the park, and the photos have kept us amused and entertained!



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Bushnell 06-06-2017 18:10:59



Bushnell 10-25-2017 05:25:37



Bushnell 08-18-2017 21:52:32

Volunteer *Danny Garcia*

By Kelly Hayes

Danny Garcia has been volunteering at Pinnacle Peak for about a year and a half. He is an important part of our amazing Trail Maintenance Crew. He also assists us in the office and with trail roving. Let's just say, Danny is always quick to lend a helping hand, in any way he can. Danny came to us after retiring from the Scottsdale Police Department after 27 years of service. Before that, he was an army medic for 25 years. Danny's life has revolved around helping others - and we are so grateful he chose Pinnacle Peak to spend his extra time at.

In Danny's spare time (when he is not volunteering at PPP, working as a security guard at a church, taking care of three dogs and one horse, being a great father to six children, or a doting husband to wife Shelley) Danny also enjoys mountain biking and hiking on other trails. He says that some of his favorite trails,



other than Pinnacle Peak of course, are the Fossil Springs Wilderness trails and the Pine trailhead. Danny is a native Arizonan, growing up in Miami, AZ. He developed a sincere appreciation for the Sonoran desert and by far he says his favorite part of the desert is "the smell of Creosote bush after a rain." Most of us would have to agree with that!

Not only has Danny been a wonderful asset to our Trail Crew, he also has assisted in a couple of rescue situations here at Pinnacle Peak. And when he is working in the office, greeting visitors and answering questions about the Park, Danny will always leave you smiling. He is quick to make a joke and as you are departing the park he says, "be safe." Danny truly cares about our hikers, our staff, and other volunteers here. We surely are grateful that Danny is part of our Pinnacle Peak family!

Scheduled Activities at the Park

01/06/18 6PM Astronomy Talk
01/13/18 10AM Liberty Wildlife
01/20/18 6:15PM Astronomy Talk
01/31/18 6PM Full Moon Hike
02/03/18 10AM Liberty Wildlife
02/09/18 6:30PM Astronomy Talk
02/17/18 10AM Southwest Wildlife
02/24/18 10AM Wild at Heart bird event
03/01/18 6:45PM Full Moon Hike
03/03/18 10AM Southwest Wildlife
03/16/18 7PM Astronomy Talk
03/31/18 7PM Full Moon Hike
03/24/18 10AM Phoenix Herpetological Society
04/07/18 10AM Pat Rickard playing her original
compositions on the Native
American Flute in the ramda
04/29/18 7:15PM Full Moon Hike
05/04/18 7:45PM Astronomy Talk
05/05/18 10AM Phoenix Herpetological Society
05/18/18 7:45PM Astronomy Talk
05/29/18 7:45PM Full Moon Hike
06/28/18 8PM Full Moon Hike
09/15/18 7PM Astronomy Talk
09/24/18 6:30PM Full Moon Hike
10/06/18 6:30PM Astronomy Talk
10/24/18 6PM Full Moon Hike
11/02/18 6PM Astronomy Talk
12/07/18 5:45PM Astronomy Talk
12/22/18 5:30PM Full Moon Hike
12/29/18 6PM Astronomy Talk

Free Guided Nature Tours offered every
Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday, November
through March. Beginning at 10AM. 1.5-2 hours,
1.5 miles. No reservations needed

* Reservations are required a week ahead of all
events except the Liberty Wildlife, Southwest
Wildlife, and Guided Nature Tours events, please
contact the park. Astronomy Nights have a minimum
age of 8 to attend and must be booked two weeks in
advance. Please call the Park's main number at
480-312-0990 for more information, or to make your
reservation.



**This Newsletter is published by
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Send newsletter feedback and input to:
FPPEditor@gmail.com

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