



## **The President's Corner**

Happy New Year to all! Welcome back snowbirds and seasonal residents. It was nice to see so many of you at the Annual Meeting. I hope you enjoyed the presentation by Vince Pinto. 2020 brings in a new Board. I'm excited by the incredible talent these dedicated volunteers bring to our organization. I would also like to recognize departing Board members Jim Woodward, President; Louise Gibbeson, Secretary and Carole deRivera, Chair for Fund Raising and Events. Thank you for your service.

I hope all you have had a chance to walk the recently completed Accessible Trail. Many years in the making, it came to fruition late summer and fall through the efforts of the US Forest service, specifically, John Titre in partnership with the Friends. It is magnificent! We are starting this year with a project to refurbish the Amphitheatre. Once again we will work with the USFS and our valued partners at the Green Valley Hiking Club to replace the old wooden benches with repurposed synthetic planks that have a lifetime warranty. A second project to regrade and rehabilitate the terribly eroded hill at the top of the turn-around is in the planning stages. To accomplish these enhancements to our beautiful Canyon does take money. Any donations marked for those capital improvements is appreciated. Want a tax advantaged method to contribute? See the Qualified Charitable Deduction article.

We have some interesting information to share from Doug Moore, Education Director; Anita Woodward, Music in the Canyon and Rhonda Woods, Historian. So enjoy this edition of the Canyon Chatter

Thank you all, active members, volunteers and supporters for making the Friends the great organization it is today.

Send me your comments, questions and ideas.

Rusty Lombardo, President

## **Enjoy the Canyon AND Interacting with Our Visitors!**

**By Anita Woodward**

Did you know that we, members of the Friends, are the ones who greet visitors to Madera Canyon? Yes, the Visitor Information Station (VIS) is staffed on weekends by FoMC volunteers. The VIS is the little brown building just below Proctor parking.

We give out maps, a Welcome to Madera Canyon brochure, bird lists, and other written information. Visitors often ask question about how to pay for parking, or where to go for a picnic or an easy hike. Canyon visitors come from all over the world, especially during spring bird migration, and it's wonderful to get to talk with them.

Volunteers work in pairs for two hour shifts on weekends. Most take one shift a month, but scheduling is very flexible. Orientation and training is provided.

Is this something you might enjoy doing as a volunteer? If so, or if you aren't sure but want more information about it, contact Anita Woodward, at 520-777-8045 or [awoodw3369@aol.com](mailto:awoodw3369@aol.com). We are always looking for more volunteers. And if we can increase our numbers by enough, we could expand the hours the VIS is open! We hope to hear from you.

## **Music in the Canyon Returns in 2020!**

As a reminder, we will again be having outdoor concerts at the Proctor Ramada this spring. Because of high demand, we are expanding the season to 5 weeks

this year!! The dates will be 3/29, 4/5, 4/19, 4/26 and 5/3. All concerts will start at 3:00 p.m. and last about an hour.

Mark your calendars now as tickets will go on sale (on line only) in early March, and stay tuned for announcements of the great acts we will have this year which will include Native Flute, Mariachi, Jazz Reggae, Motown and Blues. As always, proceeds benefit our education funds.

**Thank you, FoMC Docent Volunteers!**

**By Education Director Doug Moore**

All dedicated Friends of Madera Canyon volunteers deserve an enthusiastic “thank you” and hearty pat on the back for all the time and work they contribute! It is not easy to keep a non-profit organization such as the FoMC going. It is a collection of “real jobs” that take dedicated people, significant time commitment and lots of work! As Education Director, I’d specifically like to acknowledge and thank the FOMC Natural History Docents that continue to make our field trips, activities and events a success!

This November, the 4<sup>th</sup> grade Nature Walk Program finishes up another successful year of student field trips. Docents helped 265 4<sup>th</sup> graders from Sopori, Continental, San Cayetano, Mountain View, Great Expectations Academy and Desert Christian (Tucson) schools explore the nature of Madera Canyon in 2019. (Special nature walks are also arranged for Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and home-schooled groups upon request.) After all the years, I still find it amazing that every walk- no matter how many students attend- enough docents always show up to not only make the walk happen, but also send the kids back to school saying, “Wow, that was awesome!” That is true volunteer spirit of commitment, dedication and caring!

Founded by Patsy Proctor and Betty Lane in 1988, this FoMC program has been effectively introducing local children to the nature of Madera Canyon- that’s 31 years! Over 10,500 students have participated in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade nature walks, all mentored by FoMC docent volunteers.

The 4<sup>th</sup> grade nature walks are one part of the FOMC Education Program to promote “conservation through education” with activities for children and adults in Madera Canyon and the community. Held in spring and fall, nature walks allow local students to get outside and visit the canyon while developing their own powers of observation to become “naturalists” exploring the nature of Madera Canyon. When learning about a special place like Madera Canyon, children (and adults) become curious and take interest. They form a personal connection with the canyon and its wild flora and fauna. Personal connections promote caring, inspiring a person, young or older, to want to help protect and preserve the canyon they care about and, by extension, other wild places and their inhabitants.

It is also a great concern that so many of our children and grandchildren are detrimentally growing up without any significant connection with nature- a phenomenon termed “Nature Deficit Disorder.” Many kids spend a considerable time indoors each day looking at phones and other screen devices, which has been shown to effect brain development and eyesight. Humans evolved to thrive better within more natural conditions. Compelling scientific evidence proves that spending time outdoors in nature improves children's health, stimulates creativity, sharpens thinking skills, and helps them care about the environment. I have a gut feeling that contact with nature provides much the same benefits for adults too! So, let’s continue to help everyone “turn it off and take it outside”!

So, docents, THANK YOU for your contribution to the Friends of Madera Canyon! Thanks for showing up and lending a helping-hand, for braving chilly, windy mornings, the occasional misbehaving child (or parent!), the necessary child-in-hand bathroom runs back down the trail, the mesquite smoker smoke and crowded parking at the Pecan Festival! FOMC docents ARE making a difference!

Have you ever thought about becoming a FoMC natural history docent? (Or recommending a nature-oriented friend?) It may be the best job you've ever volunteered for and the company is fantastic! Docents must be current FoMC members to qualify for USFS insurance coverage. All participants make a commitment to attend school walks in the Spring/Fall, and also help with FoMC & community events. If you are a kind, enthusiastic, reliable nature lover interested in working with kids and other docents, please contact Doug Moore at [maderaedu@msn.com](mailto:maderaedu@msn.com) or 520-682-0459 for more information.

### **Attention Talented FOMC Members**

Do you have a presentation to share on topics related to nature, conservation, geology, archeology, histories of the western hemisphere, or other related topics? The FoMC Board of Directors is seeking members who are experienced speakers with passion, and knowledge of *compelling subjects that would be of interest to the general public*.

Would you be willing to donate your time and expertise by volunteering to speak on behalf of FOMC, and our endeavors which sustain Madera Canyon and the immediate region?

**If you wish to volunteer for our "Speaker's Bureau" please write "SPEAKER" in the subject line of your email, and send it to:**

**["info@friendsofmaderacanyon.org"](mailto:info@friendsofmaderacanyon.org)**

### **Madera Canyon Species Spotlight: White-nosed Coati**

**By Doug Moore, Education Director**

Leaving the Canyon one afternoon, Laurie and I surprised a large animal in the road just below Proctor. It wheeled to face the car head on, bristling as we came at it. I recall a slender body on short, bowed legs and a stupendously long erect tail. My immediate impression was, "There's a monkey in Madera Canyon?!?" As we slowed to a stop, the critter turned to reveal a long pig-like snout; faint rings of light and dark fur banded the tail. We realized it was a big, solitary Coati, arguably the most exotic mammals in the Santa Rita Mountains.

This past Summer, Fall and Winter, Coatis have been a main attraction for canyon visitors. There has been a large troop of females and youngsters often seen foraging in mid-canyon, as well as several handsome solitary males. One “publicity hound” has even been given his own designated feeder at the Santa Rita Lodge, possibly garnering more photos than the local hummingbirds!



White-nosed Coatis (*Nasua narica*) are brown-furred relatives of raccoons and ringtails. Possessing a rather bizarre combination of physical features, like the armadillo, it has been suggested that they were “designed by committee!” These medium-sized mammals sport a dark facial mask with light spots above/below the eyes and a white band around the muzzle behind the nose (thus the common name). They have short legs with stout, elongated front claws for digging and walk “flat-footed” like bears and humans. Unlike its relatives, a coati’s long tail is indistinctly banded and often held upright, like a signal flag. Short, rounded ears

are placed close to the skull. Their long snout is mobile and tipped with a blunt pad – “electrical-outlet shaped” nose prints in soft soil can reveal where coatis have been foraging. There are several other Coati species further south in the Americas.

These mammals often live in mobile groups consisting of adult females, yearlings and infants. Adult males are usually solitary most of the year. Coatis primarily inhabit the oak and pine-oak woodlands in the lower canyons of the Sky Islands in southeast Arizona and are often seen near streams or a water source. They are adept tree climbers. Not desert dwellers, they will travel through desert scrub or desert grassland when moving from one place to another.

Coatis are truly omnivorous and eat whatever is available. They regularly feed on invertebrates, lizards, snakes, rodents and carrion, as well as the fruits and nuts of trees, shrubs, prickly pear and yucca. Snuffling through leaf litter, digging in the dirt, and turning rocks and logs, a band of Coatis can leave ample evidence of their passing! In the canyon, fallen acorns and ripe juniper berries are a particularly important pre-winter food source.

These adaptable animals are believed to be fairly recent immigrants to the region, their range extension from the mountains of northern Mexico facilitated by the ready availability of carrion beef after the catastrophic drought of the early 1890's. The first recorded specimen was taken from the Huachuca Mountains in 1892 and they have spread throughout the Sky Island ranges since. Recent records extend as far north as Walnut Canyon near Flagstaff and Petrified Forest National Park.

## **Back in the Day with Jim Tolley**

**By Rhonda Woods**

Now 91 years of age, and living in Tucson, Jim Tolley recalls his eleven childhood summers in Madera Canyon, beginning with his *first* summer there, at 10-years-old, in 1938.

Jim's father, Willis F. Tolley, purchased a lease on a Forest Service cabin opposite the current Amphitheater trail head in 1938. At this family cabin, the only other

child was Willis B. Tolley, Jim's brother, who was 13 years old. Once their chores were done for the day, the brothers would seek their own adventures. There were very few children around Madera Canyon at this time. In the summer months, about 10 Madera Forest Service cabins were occupied, and even fewer in the winter, thus, children had to invent ways to entertain themselves, and make friends with adults in the Canyon.

One summer season, a Columbia University (New York) professor, came to young Jim, and offered 50 cents for each bat Jim could capture and bring to him. The professor had an injured owl he was trying to rehabilitate.

Between 1938 and 1948 Jim says he *never once* saw a hummingbird, or a bear, or even bear scat! Not many flowers for hummingbirds in the forest, unlike what we find today at the Santa Rita Lodge avian feeding area.

During later summers, 1945 – 1947, Jim worked with the Forest Service Trail/Fire Crews, coming to know the Madera Canyon vicinity very well. "I probably hiked to Baldy Saddle and beyond 70-90 times over those 11 years."

From multiple mountain hikes, Jim recalled particular memories of the "Baldy-Look-Out," whose lonely mission was to communicate fire-related events he spotted from that highly elevated position. The Baldy Look-Out in those early years, was a Patagonia resident, and he was always happy to visit with any of the kids who made the trek up from Madera Canyon. The boys were told about an odd discovery having been found just below the "Look-Out" station. ... a small skull with horns growing "backwards." The adults wondered if this was a wild goat? They never knew for certain. Jim said he and Willis only made "day-hikes". These boys covered a lot of ground in one day!

A Tolley cabin neighbor, Mr. Mallory, had offered to take the Tolley brothers on a hike, and with parental permission, the three headed to the wee-town of *Patagonia!* Mr. Mallory was a single Irishman, retired Merchant Marine who'd lived abroad in many places.

How fascinating, to these young boys that hike must have been- to hear the tales from such a worldly fellow! Jim shared that "the first 7 miles of our hike was

interesting and enjoyable, with oaks and pines, but after Josephine Saddle it was up and down, continuous rolling terrain, not as interesting.” They took water with them, and also drank directly from springs, which in present -day, is not recommended. Jim believes this Madera Canyon to Patagonia hike- with an overnight on blankets, was about 23 to 27 miles long. Once they reached the little general store in Patagonia, the boys called their Mom for a ride back to Madera Canyon. Mr. Mallory left Madera Canyon after 1939 for California.

Jim reported that water in the Madera creeks use to flow until about July 1<sup>st</sup>, and re-started after Monsoon season arrived. Today, we see not 10 months of water in the creeks, but maybe 4 months, in a good mountain snow season, or heavy monsoon year.

*A memorable phenomenon* was the Forest Service Look-Out lightning rods - which in a “normal storm” would turn blue, and *hummm...*

While this article is just a fraction of Mr. Tolley’s remembrances, in closing our oral history of Madera Canyon, I asked Jim if he had a “*special place*” in his memories of the Canyon? His reply; “***Up at Florida Saddle -100-200 yards-in.... Armour Spring.***”

(Note: Armour Spring can be found on the Madera Canyon Trail Map, at approximately 8000 feet as part of the Four Springs Trail. **Friends of Madera Canyon** appreciate your support towards the printing costs of these valuable trail guides, and also please find the trail maps on-line at [www.friendsofmaderacanyon.org](http://www.friendsofmaderacanyon.org) )

We are sincerely grateful to James Tolley for his preparation, time, and willingness to bring these memories to life, and share them with us.

### **Qualified Charitable Distributions – a Win Win Way to Give**

Changes in the tax laws have all but eliminated deductions for many. However, if you are 70 ½ years of age and have a tax deferred IRA account subject to a Required Minimum Distribution, QCDs are something you ought to consider for all your charitable giving. A QCD is a way to give some of those tax deferred dollars

to a qualified (501 (c)3) non-profit, like the Friends without paying tax on those donations as a withdrawal. At the same time it reduces your taxable income from your RMD, but counts as part of your annual RMD. For example: Mary has a traditional IRA and has an RMD of \$15,000. She decides to give \$1,000 to FoMC. Your financial advisor or broker prepares a check for the same in the name of FoMC and either sends it directly to them or to you for distribution. If your former employer still matches funds, you can even double down by sending the proper form to FoMC to complete and submit. At tax time, the RMD will show \$15,000 - \$1,000 (QCD) reducing her taxable income. You do not have to file an itemized return and can still use the standard deduction. Anyone who meets these requirements and is not considering a QCD is in effect losing part of the purchase power of each dollar equivalent to their tax bracket. Here is a link with more information: <https://www.investopedia.com/articles/financial-advisors/032116/how-use-qcd-rule-reduce-your-taxes.asp>

Talk to your broker or financial planner for more details.

**EVERY DAY IS A BEAUTIFUL DAY IN MADERA CANYON. GO OUT AND ENJOY THE RESOURCE YOU AS STEWARDS ARE SO DEDICATED TO PRESERVING FOR ALL!**