



Shape the Future

# Canyon Chatter

Friends of Madera Canyon

April, 2026



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**On the Cover.** Backswimmers are slender, oval, streamlined water bugs that swim with long, oarlike hind legs covered in fine hair-like structures. The back is keeled, resembling the bottom of a boat, and lacks narrow parallel lines. The animal usually swims backward or with its belly up. Backswimmers rest on the water surface, tilted head-downward, with the tip of the abdomen protruding from the water. The oar-like hind legs are generally extended downward at angles to the body. A thin, silvery bubble of air trapped against the body allows the insect to stay underwater for periods. To prevent floating back to the surface, backswimmers must grasp a plant stem or other object. Please note that backswimmers are predatory and can deliver a painful bite if mishandled.

Backswimmer, *Notonecta ?uhleri*, Photo: Alan Schmierer

**Join Friends of Madera Canyon.** Below are links to join as a new member, renew a membership or make a donation. The links will take you to a secure server to use to make an automated payment. Do you have any questions? Let us know. If you prefer to help by writing a check, please make your check payable to Friends of Madera Canyon - mail to: FOMC, Box 1203, Green Valley, Arizona, 85622-1203. [New Membership Click Here](#) OR [Renew An Old Membership](#).

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# From the President

## Madera Canyon

You and I share a commitment to the “preservation, conservation, and restoration” of Madera Canyon as members of the Friends.

What, exactly, are we preserving? Why?

What if the Canyon did not belong to the whole nation, administered as it is by the Forest Service? What if Madera Canyon belonged to us as an organization, in a manner similar, say, to the way in which land is owned by The Nature Conservancy?

What if we were responsible for explaining what we want to see happen in and to the Canyon in the next 25 years, and our reasons? What in the Canyon is worth preserving and in what way?

A colleague got me thinking about these things. My first thought was about what might be worth preserving at other special spots in nature and why. Some answers are easy. There is a National Park in which there is a canyon so magnificent that it is called Grand. People go there because of the immensity and beauty of that work of Nature. People travel to Yellowstone to see geysers, to Bryce and Zion to see beautiful red rocks carved by natural forces into wondrous edifices.

In the early 20th century, political leaders created National Parks to ensure that generations of people would have the opportunity to see what nature has done. Without such protections, there is no telling what might have happened to the phenomena being preserved.

What attracts people—us—to Madera Canyon? Our Canyon is one of the very few canyons in the Sky Islands of Southeast Arizona with a paved road extending deep into it. As a result, the visitor count for Madera Canyon is substantially bigger than for other Sky Island canyons. Is that a good thing?

You and I can recite the major reasons people come to the Canyon. What would happen if twice as many people as come now had reasons to come to the Canyon? Is there such a thing as too many?

If you and I, as members of the Friends, were in that ownership group imagined above, what would we want the Canyon to be in 2051? What might be the action(s) we would need to take to achieve what we have imagined?

I suspect that many of us might select a default position, something like, I want to ensure that my children and grandchildren have the opportunity to benefit from the Canyon in the same way I do. Safe hiking trails, accommodating birding locales, well-tended picnic areas, settings seeming like sanctuaries for reflection and quiet; it is hard to argue that any of these would not be desirable. They are what we have now.

I am interested in what you, the reader, think. In my experience, wanting to preserve something “just the way it is” takes a lot of effort. And choosing what we might want to be even more different.



If my words prompt you to think as a proprietor of the Canyon about Madera Canyon, charged with laying out a plan for it in 2051, great! Write me an email or send me a letter and share your thoughts.

Maybe, just, maybe, if you and I can be clear about what we are preserving and why, we might be helpful to the Forest Service and the folks who really bear the responsibility of planning for the future of the Canyon.

## **A Coda from Music in the Canyon**

The first Music in the Canyon show of the year happened on Sunday, March 29. As the crowd gathered, so did the clouds. There was a steady breeze, and the sunless lighting made us feel like we were in a music club room.

Not long into the show, the crowd saw lightning in the clouds to the southwest. Later, dramatic shapes of lightning bolts were visible, though still at a distance. It was hard not to wonder if the show would have to be shortened.

Yet, the sweet sounds, ranging from Peggy Lee to Ray Charles to the Beatles and Sting, kept drawing the audience from worry about the weather to being embraced by the music.

If you are a fan of metaphors, the scene offered several. Music and Madera Canyon can lift our spirits even when there are storms around us.

Dan White  
April 2026





## Announcements

### Bench Project Completed Update on Naming Benches

The first benches to be named by donors for the period of the next ten years can now be seen on our website. Under the tab “Ways to Help,” those three are there to illustrate the templates that donors can choose for their message and pictures of the bench. Under the Donors tab, all of the benches, their GPS locations, pictures, and written messages will be displayed in the order in which they are added to the list.

Thanks to the generosity of the Greater Green Valley Community Foundation and significant gifts of time from FOMC members and spouses, the planks on all of the 22 benches we targeted have been replaced. From times I have been on the Proctor and Whitehouse Loops and the trail between Whitehouse and Madera Picnic area, I have heard compliments and expressions of gratitude from visitors. Clearly, this has been a project worth doing but, as always, it has taken generosity of time, talent, and money to complete. Several more benches have now been selected by donors and the website displays under development. Use the list on the Dedicated Benches message under Ways to Help to see how benches look like and where they are located as a start.

If you are interested in knowing more about funding the naming of a bench, please feel free to contact Dan White ([dan.white@friendsofmaderacanyon.org](mailto:dan.white@friendsofmaderacanyon.org)), Michele Gazica ([michele.gazica@friendsofmaderacanyon.org](mailto:michele.gazica@friendsofmaderacanyon.org)), or Executive Director Kristin Wisneski-Blum ([kristin@friendsofmaderacanyon.org](mailto:kristin@friendsofmaderacanyon.org)).

Dan White



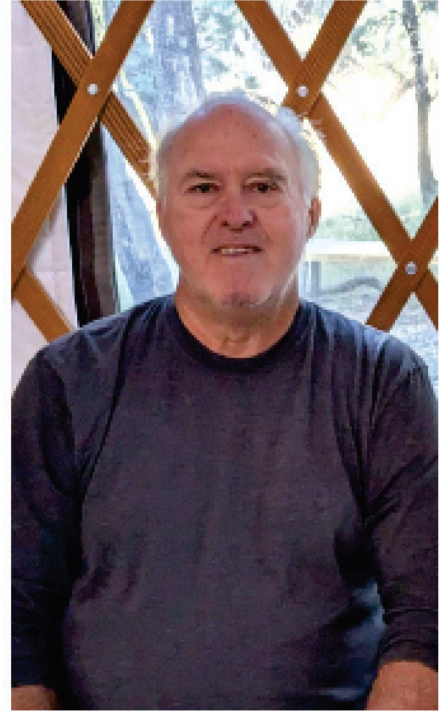
# Volunteer Spotlight

## Dennis Wier

Nominated by: Colleen Verge, Cleanup Crew Coordinator

Dennis is a kind and giving person, always friendly to visitors and other volunteers. He is consistently reliable, except the 2nd Monday of the month when he makes about 500 sandwiches for the needy, which speaks to his commitment to the community. Dennis rides his motorcycle up to Madera Canyon every Monday with his trash bucket strapped to the side of his bike. He is always willing to help a fellow trasher and also volunteered for the vehicle count when another volunteer couldn't do it anymore. His favorite spot to work is the Madera Picnic area but always willing to check on the Amphitheater to pick up trash.

"I enjoy the quiet mornings during clean up, having herds of turkeys come to visit as I clean, visiting with passing hikers and visitors. I have been ashing and trashing for about 3 years. Also, I belong to the GVR clay club and do service work at our church." From Minnesota, in Arizona since 1982.



# Education Report

## “It’s Getting Tough Out There” Doug Moore, Education Director

Last Thursday, Mrs. Valenzuela’s class from Mt. View Elementary arrived at Proctor for the first 4th-grade nature walk of spring, 2026. It was a beautiful morning in the canyon, 72 degrees when the bus arrived at 9:20 am. But ominously, there was a heat weather alert on- a forecast of 95 degrees on the mountain, potentially the hottest March temperatures on record!

Since we had scheduled an early start, Mt. View opted to do the field trip. We prepared well, made adjustments, and everyone had excellent activity despite the heat. The kids explored the lower canyon, enjoyed the quick-running stream, and saw birds, butterflies, and wildflowers aplenty. It was good fun...

But it was not our usual spring nature walk- special measures were necessary to keep everyone heat safe! Docents moved groups quickly across sunny spaces to stay in shade. We only walked a short section of the Proctor Loop, rather than all the way round. Everyone always carries water, but this time, good hydration was supervised/prioritized. Groups also returned to the trailhead by 11:00 to “beat the heat”, instead of our usual 11:45. Short and sweet, but students, parents, and staff loaded up the bus and were off to the shady Whitehouse Ramada for a picnic safe and sound. This Thursday, another class comes up from Mt. View; the forecast is only two degrees cooler. So here we go with heat safety measures again... in March!

The strong early heat wave illustrates increasing challenges facing our 4th-grade canyon field trips in recent years. Walks are scheduled in spring & fall when school is in session, and seasonal temperatures (heat and cold) allow for safe and enjoyable canyon exploration. Recently, both the spring and fall field trip windows have been getting shorter as seasonal average temperatures soar! It becomes difficult to schedule walks in April & October when temperatures reach 90-100 degrees. (90 to 100 degrees in March is just crazy!) Add in COVID, April standardized testing, spring break, fall break, Tucson Rodeo Week, and other holidays, and it becomes clear how challenging it has become to keep the 4th-grade walks going for our local elementary partners. Maybe if this past “winter” portends a new normal- with essentially spring-like conditions from late October to February- we’ll just shift our schedule around the holidays!?!?

Despite the challenges, the program has some fantastic volunteers- dedicated docent leaders and “sweeps”- that reliably show up and work hard to introduce our local students to the nature of Madera Canyon. These volunteers are cheerful, flexible, and resilient, despite the conditions- heat, cold, sun, wind, sprinkles, or shine! Best, the kids and their teachers absolutely adore them and the Proctor Walk!

So to our dear docents- a hearty thanks to you all from your Ed Director; it does not happen without you! I would particularly like to recognize current docents with incredible volunteer longevity: Darren Diehr started in 1997; Nancy Bowen has participated since 2007; Craig & Kirk McFall started in 2010 (Craig just retired at end of 2025); Jim Burkstrand put on the vest in 2014; Julie Porter in 2015; Dave DeGroot in 2018. That is an impressive record for the total years!

Luckily for the program, some very capable new volunteers have recently joined the corps to help share the important task of introducing Madera Canyon to our youth. It is my privilege to meet up with Judy, Jean, Laura, Michele, Fran (and often, Dan!) on Thursday mornings at Proctor. I know how much each cherishes time in the canyon. And I can see their excitement about mentoring and nurturing every student they meet.



With March winding down, it looks like the heat might moderate, also. Forecasts for the first weeks of April are more seasonal- temps in the 70s and 80s. The program has two more elementary school walks and two high school field trips in April, squeezed in around testing. But even if the weather forecasts prove false, I know that we'll be in the canyon regardless, to greet the school buses, meet the kids, and lead them on a special discovery walk in Madera Canyon.



Docents at the Proctor Trailhead, March 2026  
Photo: Doug Moore



## Springtime In Madera Canyon

Bob Pitcher

I park the truck at Proctor Road a minute or two after 8:00, Monday morning, March 16. Looks to be a fine day, still just a bit cool with a little breeze; but the sun is up over the eastern rim of the Canyon. I've come, impatiently, to see what birds there might be here today at various places in Madera. I say impatiently because March in southern Arizona is, as they say in the travel business, a shoulder season. One knows spring migration is on the way, and there'll be singing birds in bright breeding plumage filling the Canyon. But though there have been plenty of signs of spring among the birds for several weeks now, with wintering species packing up to go north, and some permanent residents softly rehearsing their spring songs, migration is usually, mid-March, still some time away.

### The Proctor Trail

The Proctor Road trail was at its best this morning, however, with the creek still running, and the Canyon vegetation remarkably green from all the winter rains. Purple Scorpion-weed flowers were out in large patches, along with California Poppies -- the latter, so early in the day, still largely folded. Under the first oaks along the way, orange Honeysuckle flowers were open, inviting hummingbirds -- but there were no takers, at least while I watched.

As I passed by the Morales gravesite, an Inca Dove began to call, an unusual bird in the Canyon, though there have been several around this winter. I soon saw a couple of male Yellow-rumped Warblers, now with brightened plumage. These may have been migrants; though there are plenty of Yellow-rumps in the Canyon in winter, many more move though early in the spring to breed farther north.

For some distance, that was all the bird life I saw or heard. I saw far more butterflies than birds in most places during the day, and there were generally far more insects about than there were along the Proctor trail a month earlier. The cottonwoods along the creek were a beautiful fresh green, as were the Velvet Ash trees. The Arizona Sycamores were barely starting to get new leaves, and the oaks that lost their leaves in last year's drought seem hesitant to produce more quite so soon.



Hooded Oriole.

Credit: Lesly Torres/USFWS



At the top of the paved trail, recent efforts of Friends of Madera Canyon volunteers are evident. Years of eroded silt from slopes above had covered the walkway in places. This has been shoveled away and a small retaining wall built to stave off a repeat of the problem, at least in the short term. It was about here that I heard a White-winged Dove call – certainly an early migrant from the south. And there was a flock of Mexican Jays near the staircase bridge.

But no more birds as I came back down the trail, not even wintering species, let alone migrants. A Northern Cardinal was singing near the parking lot, and a Common Raven called in the distance. Another birder let me know that there was a Hooded Oriole near the parking lot, but I didn't see it. Still, an awfully nice morning for a walk in an unfailingly beautiful spot.

### **Madera Picnic Area**

I moved up to the Madera Canyon Picnic Area. It was now perfectly pleasant without my jacket. And now far more birds in the trees above the picnic tables and along the creek both a little above and a little below them. Within a few minutes, I saw, in a very loose mixed flock, a female Olive Warbler, a couple of Bewick's Wren, a Dark-eyed Junco or two, up to four very active Hutton's Vireos, a couple of Ruby-crowned Kinglets (for a handy comparison with the Vireos), a pair of White-breasted Nuthatches, a pair of Yellow Warblers (now the Northern Yellow Warbler, with a species split), a Hammond's Flycatcher, and one or two Bridled Titmice. There were of course a flock of Mexican Jays – seven altogether, I think – and fussing Acorn Woodpeckers. A Northern Flicker called nearby,



**Bewick's Wren**  
Peter Pearsall/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



**Male Hepatic Tanager**  
By Elaine R. Wilson - <http://www.naturespicsonline.com/Nature24/index.htm?3>, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2601912>





Painted Redstart  
Wikipedia

though I never saw it. Also calling were a Painted Redstart, maybe two, a White-winged Dove, and a somewhat early Warbling Vireo (now the Western Warbling Vireo). Down the trail to the north were a Gray Flycatcher, a female Anna's Hummingbird, and an Hepatic Tanager, mostly hidden in the foliage of an oak.

So, a lot of birds in the Picnic Area – but few of them migrants, or at least not certainly migrants. Painted Redstarts filter up from Mexico early in the season, as do Olive Warblers, but there are a few of both species in the Canyon most every winter. The White-winged Dove too, was probably one of those that has been at the Santa Rita Lodge's feeders for months now – and the Tanager as well. Only the Yellow Warblers and the Warbling Vireo were surely newly arrived migrants. And another non-migrant: a Canyon Tree Frog was calling hoarsely from a pool along the creek.

#### Santa Rita Lodge

I ended the morning by the feeders at the Santa Rita Lodge. They were busier than I have seen them this winter, and some of the birds there were clearly migrants. Broad-billed Hummingbirds were very scarce in the Canyon this winter, but there were at least four pairs there, I would guess, and perhaps more. The males were exceptionally bright blue in the morning light. And I saw a single Black-chinned Hummingbird, another migrant.

There were at least three White-winged Doves, one probably a newcomer. Only a single Mourning Dove, meek in the presence of the larger White-wings, and a second Inca Dove safely off to the side. Seven Turkeys were also there, with the usual Acorn Woodpeckers, Mexican Jays, and Lesser Goldfinches. But the Goldfinches were outnumbered by a small flock of Pine Siskins, monopolizing whatever feeder they chose, even against larger House Finches.

There's no question I missed some birds. A few migrants seem to be reported every day from the Canyon. And migration may



Hammond's Flycatcher  
National Parks Collection



Common Black Hawk  
pixibay.com



be farther along at lower elevations: some 400 Common Black Hawks have passed by the Tubac Hawk Watch during the first half of March, and Lucy's Warblers and Bell's Vireos have reached at least as far north as Marana. The whole Spring Rush can't be far behind now. But I write this on March 18 – by the time you read it, migration will be in full swing in the Canyon.



Bell's Vireo at Sam Nail Ranch. Texas



# Sky Island Field Notes from Your Executive Director

Dear Friends and Partners of Madera Canyon,

I wanted to share a quick summary of a significant change announced by the USDA on March 31st that affects the U.S. Forest Service and, by extension, our work in the Canyon.

The organizational changes are substantial. The existing regional office structure will be eliminated and replaced by a state-based model, with 15 state directors distributed across the country to oversee forest operations and relationships with states, tribes, and local partners. Many functions currently housed in regional offices will shift to a network of operational service centers in six cities, including Albuquerque, NM; Fort Collins, CO; and Missoula, MT, among others. The agency's research stations will also be consolidated under a single organization based in Fort Collins. The USDA has emphasized that frontline operations — including active forest management, wildfire response, and recreation management — will continue without interruption throughout the transition.

That continuity matters deeply to us, because the work FOMC does in Madera Canyon touches everyone who loves this place. Our volunteer crews keep the Canyon clean and its trails safe and accessible for the thousands of visitors who come each year — including people with mobility challenges who depend on our handicapped-accessible trail maintenance. Our educational programs bring school children into one of the most ecologically remarkable landscapes in North America, nurturing the next generation of stewards for this Sky Island ecosystem. And by promoting responsible use, we help protect the rare and irreplaceable wildlife — the elegant trogons, the coatis, the diverse hummingbirds — that make Madera Canyon a destination for visitors from around the world. This is not just volunteer work. It is the day-to-day care that keeps a fragile and beloved place thriving.

FOMC will be following the course of this reorganization closely, so that we can continue our long, close, and valued working partnership with the Forest Service for the benefit of Madera Canyon.

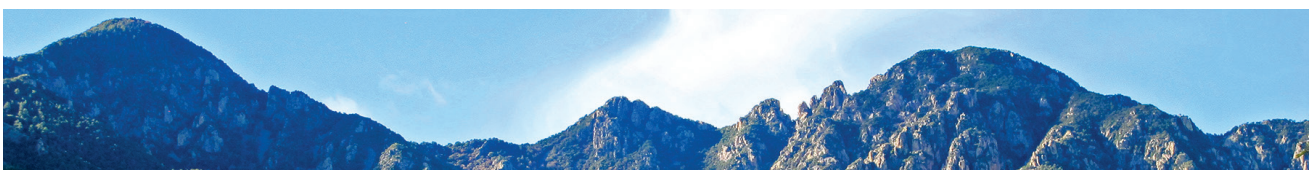
As always, please feel free to reach out with any questions at [executivedirector@friendsofmaderacanyon.org](mailto:executivedirector@friendsofmaderacanyon.org), or contact Dan White, Board President, at [president@friendsofmaderacanyon.org](mailto:president@friendsofmaderacanyon.org).

Thank you as always for your support,

Kristin Wisneski-Blum

Executive Director, Friends of Madera Canyon

Reference: USDA Prioritizing Common Sense Forest Management, Moves Forest Service Headquarters to Salt Lake City [<https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/press-releases/2026/03/31/usda-prioritizing-common-sense-forest-management-moves-forest-service-headquarters-salt-lake-city>] Published: March 31, 2026





## Our Second Annual Earth Day Event

Our Second Annual Earth Day community event is just around the corner, on April 18. As a valued part of our volunteer-powered community, you are invited to come out and join us in restoring the habitat along the Old Baldy Approach Trail.

It's a three-hour commitment. There is a short up-hill walk involved, but the longest distance anyone would be required to walk is two-tenths of a mile. Some volunteers will be digging three-inch divots, and others will be planting seedballs, so expect to bend. You'll get on-the-job training – No experience necessary! You do need to register, however, so we can ensure an adequate supply of tools and donuts.

Find out more information and a link to the registration on the Friends website <https://friendsofmaderacanyon.org/support/earth-day-2026/>

If playing in the dirt outside does not appeal to you, there is another way to help! In preparation for the event, some of us are making seed balls that will be used on April 18. You can join a group event on April 11 - Whitehouse Picnic ramada from 11:00 to 1:00. It's a bit like making tiny mudpies: we can re-live our childhoods for a few hours. Do let us know if you plan to join so we can have adequate supplies on hand: email me at [michele.gazica@friendsofmaderacanyon.org](mailto:michele.gazica@friendsofmaderacanyon.org).

You can also support the effort by making seedballs in the comfort of your own homes! Seed ball kits will be available for pickup at the VIS while supplies last on Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 8:am to noon. Completed seedballs must be returned to the VIS on Friday, April 17 between 8am and noon.

Best news of all? These events are open to the public, not just members. They offer a wonderful opportunity to share the Canyon you love with your out of town guests. Friends? Bring them! Family? Bring them! Anyone 12 and older is welcome to join in the fun.



# Another Earth Day Event

**EARTH DAY**  
*Yoga*

Join yoga instructors, Sarah Bayze & Jen Rischard, in this 90 minute all-levels yoga class exploring *Virya* in honor of Earth Day! *Virya* = right effort. How we use our energy matters, for our bodies and our planet. *Virya* is effort guided by wisdom. Earth Day reminds us that our effort matters — how we walk, what we consume, how we move — all of it is energy in relationship with the Earth.

**April 18, 9:30-11:00am**  
**Santa Rita Lodge**  
\$25 (50% goes to Friends of Madera Canyon)

**Register at**  
**santaritalodge.**  
**com**

For another Earth Day option, you can join or try out a yoga class at the Santa Rita Lodge yurt. They are generously giving 50% of the proceeds back to the Friends of Madera Canyon. The class will be a gentle, all-levels class and will include a sound bath. Sign up for the class and more: <https://www.santaritalodge.com/Events.html>



## Editor's Desk

### Contrasting Visions for Public Lands and Wildlife Management

The island of Hispaniola is shared by two countries. To the east is the Dominican Republic and the west side of the island is Haiti. Historically, the island is renowned as the site of Christopher Columbus's first colonies (La Navidad, La Isabela, and Santo Domingo); as the epicenter of early European settlements in the Americas, and it is known for its role in Atlantic slave trade, sugar production, and spectacular beaches. It is also known for the image of the international border taken by a NASA satellite below.



A public domain image. Created: 25 September 2002. Is an image taken at 19° 9' 20.61" N, 71° 39' 0.21" W. To the left (west) is Haiti. To the right (east) is the Dominican Republic. Note the forest is completely gone in Haiti, but is doing ok in the Dominican Republic.

According to Maertens and Stork, authors of [The Real Story of Haiti's Forests](#) (2017) the common narrative that charcoal production was the sole driver of deforestation is an oversimplification. Instead, the authors argue that the loss of Haiti's forests results from a complex interplay of historical, economic, and political factors.

The removal of virgin forests started long before the modern charcoal trade. Colonial exploitation in the 17th and 18th centuries, along with the French empire, cleared large areas of forest to establish sugar cane plantations. To pay the heavy debt imposed on it by France after independence, Haiti exported large quantities of mahogany and other valuable hardwoods. The US occupation (1915–1934) further impacted forest levels due to foreign industrial interests. Forest loss accelerated significantly in the 1940s and 50s due to a “confluence of causes.” Agricultural expansion was a major factor. Today, the greatest pressure on forests comes from high demand for farmland, driven by low productivity and poor agricultural policies. Additionally, failed development projects contributed, such as during WWII, when a Haitian-American project cleared millions of trees near Jérémie to plant rubber trees, which ultimately brought no financial benefit.

Political and Religious Campaigns: An “anti-superstition” campaign by the Catholic Church and the Duvalier regime's decision to clear the Dominican border for security and policing control further decimated the tree cover.

The article highlights that the focus on charcoal producers—often the most vulnerable rural peasants—ignores the systemic issues. Reliance on charcoal persists because electricity is sporadic and alternative fuels like LPG are difficult to procure. Government bans on charcoal without providing alternative income sources or cooking fuels have proven ineffective. Most charcoal actually comes from “rak bwa” (managed



wood lots) rather than primary forests, but international aid often ignores these sustainable indigenous systems in favor of ineffective “top-down” reforestation projects.

In summary, the “real story” is not one of peasant mismanagement, but a legacy of colonial extraction, state-led land clearing, and a desperate need for agricultural reform. If you were living on Santa Domingo, which country would you want to life in?

Two articles published in High Country News offer sharply different views on how public lands and wildlife should be managed in the American West. High Country News is considered a highly credible, independent non-profit source for environmental and social news in the Western United States, often cited for in-depth, research-backed reporting. While recognized for reliable investigative journalism, it is noted to have a left-leaning, environmentalist perspective and is funded largely by subscribers

While both articles focus on ecological decline and the future of conservation, they fundamentally differ in their diagnoses, values, and proposed solutions. Bronstein (2026) provides a broad critique of extractive land management and advocates for a rewilding-focused overhaul of public lands. While Mohr (2026) describes a state-led predator-control effort in Utah, framing it as a contested but institutionally justified attempt to fix wildlife population imbalances through targeted action.

The first article offers a systemic critique of the long-standing “multiple use” framework that governs federal public lands. According to this view, multiple use has transformed into “multiple abuse,” emphasizing profit-driven extraction — grazing, logging, mining, and energy development — at the cost of biodiversity and ecological health. The article argues that incremental reforms, including newer proposals such as Ground Shift’s “primary purpose” or “dominant use” zoning model, simply repackage the same industrial paradigm in more acceptable language. By concentrating extraction into designated “sacrifice zones,” the article claims, ecological loss is still accepted as unavoidable and incompatible with true conservation efforts.

This viewpoint is based on a philosophical rejection of free-market environmentalism and the so-called “abundance movement,” which claims that increased production of energy, minerals, timber, and food can coexist with healthy ecosystems. The article argues that history shows the opposite: over a century of extractive management has fragmented habitats and weakened federal protections. Referencing the origins of public lands under Theodore Roosevelt, the author points out that these lands were intended to protect ecosystems from unchecked industrialization, not to accommodate it in more environmentally friendly-sounding ways.

The article advocates a radical alternative centered on rewilding. This approach involves permanently safeguarding wilderness and roadless areas, ending grazing and destructive logging, decommissioning roads, restoring riparian zones, and letting natural processes like wildfire unfold without industrial “management.” The strategy prioritizes ecological integrity above all else and considers human restraint — rather than technical optimization — as the key to progress.

The Mohr (2026) article, by contrast, concentrates narrowly on a specific wildlife management controversy: Utah’s state-funded effort to kill large numbers of mountain lions as part of a predator management “study.” Instead of advocating a unified normative vision, it provides a journalistic view of competing claims, institutional rationales, and public concerns surrounding the program. Utah wildlife officials defend the effort as a necessary response to declining mule deer and elk populations, citing legislative pressure and long-term data that suggest predation thresholds hindering deer recovery.

Supporters of the program see predator removal as a practical, science-based approach within current wildlife management methods. The study is well-structured, funded by hunting and conservation groups, and linked to academic researchers who handle the data analysis. From this perspective, lethal intervention is considered an acceptable — even necessary — way to achieve population goals, with success measured by increased prey survival.

However, the article also allows space for critics who challenge both the science and ethics of the approach. Ranchers, conservationists, and scientists argue that the “study” lacks meaningful safeguards,



transparency, and public involvement, and that killing “as many cougars as possible” risks ecological damage regardless of the outcome. Researchers cited in the article note that weather, habitat quality, and nutrition — not predation — are often the main factors influencing mule deer populations, and that similar predator removal efforts have shown little benefit.

Unlike Bronstein’s article’s clear call to end extractive and interventionist approaches, the second reveals a system trapped in its own beliefs. Predator control is seen as a legitimate management tool, even though evidence and experience raise doubts about its effectiveness and side effects, such as destabilizing lion populations and increasing human–wildlife conflicts.

America is having decisions about wildlife conservation and land use made for it by way of the current administration. What kind of ecosystem do you want to live in, in the future?

### References

- Bronstein A. 2026. Public lands need less extraction and more rewilding. High Country News, March 24, 2026
- Maertens L and A Stork. 2017. The Real Story of Haiti’s Forests, Changing the narrative around deforestation and charcoal in Haiti. Collage de France 1530.
- Mohr K. 2026. Utah’s new study aims to kill ‘as many cougars as possible’. High Country News, March 24, 2026.

Below is area covered with semi-desert grassland and desert scrub (A). It is at the edge of the habitat in (B) the vegetation has been removed to reveal bare dirt. The Sonoran Desert is being stripped of its flora and fauna and replaced with human habitats.



DISCOVERY FRIDAY SPRING SEMINAR SERIES 2026

# Century Range Network

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MORE INFO



**Last Friday of the Month | January - April**

10:00 - 11:00 AM (MST) | *Santa Rita Experimental Range or Online*

## SERIES SCHEDULE



Arizona  
Experiment Station

**JANUARY 30, 2026**

Santa Rita Experimental Range

Speaker: Brett Blum



**FEBRUARY 27, 2026**

Jornada Experimental Range

Speaker: Brandon Bestelmeyer (remote)



TEXAS A&M  
UNIVERSITY.

**MARCH 27, 2026**

Sonora Station

Speaker: Doug Tolleson



**APRIL 24, 2026**

IYRP Collaborative Seminar

Panelists: SRER, Jornada, & Sonora (TBD)

SANTA RITA EXPERIMENTAL RANGE  
27000 S FLORIDA STATION ROAD  
GREEN VALLEY, AZ 85614

WEBINAR REGISTRATION:  
[HTTPS://ARIZONA.ZOOM.US/WEBINAR/REGIS  
TER/jwN\\_QEKXY-B0RCQUUYIGHX3SRO](https://arizona.zoom.us/webinar/register/jwN_QEKXY-B0RCQUUYIGHX3SRO)



## Music in the Canyon

### Tickets available

This year Music in the Canyon will once again be held in the Canyon. The concerts will be held at the Proctor Ramada, which is located in the Visitor Information turn off at the entrance to the canyon. There will be limited seating in this venue so tickets will probably sell out quickly. The concert tickets will be \$40 and the concert times will be 3-4 30PM.

Our concerts will take place March 29, April 12, 19, and 26, in addition there will be a performance October 25. Tickets will be available online on March 10 and can be purchased at [friendsofmaderacanyon.org](http://friendsofmaderacanyon.org). If you have any questions or issues, call Carole deRivera at 847 702 5101. All sales are final and tickets will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis.

Artists and dates are listed. We look forward to another great season of a well-loved tradition of Music in the Canyon and hope to see you there!

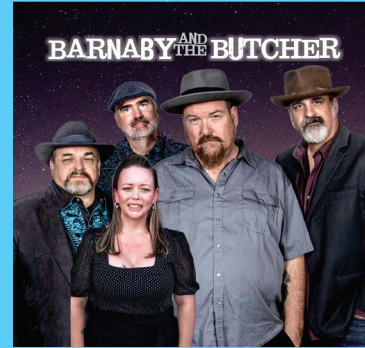


**CMS**  
**April 12**



Coy, Serres and Murphy (CMS Trio) is an acoustic folk-rock group featuring three part harmony from such classic acts as the Eagles, America, the Beatles, Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young and so many more! The trio is made up of three guys (Fred Coy, Mike Serres and Joe Murphy) who've been delighting sold-out audiences throughout Southern Arizona for a decade or so. Listeners enjoy the mix of upbeat and mellow tunes, mixed with a bit of whimsy. (These guys don't take themselves too seriously). This trio also performs as a 50's classic rock trio (The Cadillacs) as well as the band Way Back Machine.

**Barnaby and the Butcher**  
**April 19**



Barnaby and the Butcher is made up of a group of six: Damon Barnaby-electric guitar, Joshua Butcher-vocals & acoustic guitar, Robin Messing-backup vocals, Doug Floyd-electric guitar, John McIntyre-percussion and a bass player to be determined. This will be a musical experience defined by Damon Barnaby's madly skilled heritage electric guitar and Joshua Butcher's rich and powerful vocals. Their sound is complex and fervent, vacillating between dark country rock songs, bittersweet honeyed ballads and traditional country riffs. Their catalogue of originals is ever-expanding and their uniquely chosen covers include artists such as Chris Stapleton, Bonnie Raitt, John Hiatt and the Indigo Girls. This band frequently plays at the Gaslight theater, several venues in Tucson and has toured the country spreading their dynamic and individual Tucson style!



Mindy Ronstadt  
and the One Bill Band  
April 26



Mindy has been performing with her famous family all her life. She has recorded and appeared on stage with her famous Aunt Linda and now continues to perform with a variety of musicians in and around southern Arizona. There will be times you could swear you are watching and listening to Linda Ronstadt!

Bill Martin hails from the Hollywood music scene where he collaborated with several artists as well as recording as a solo artist for CBS records. Bill and Mindy have been performing together since 2002 and have fashioned a unique blend of harmonies and solo performances.

Women of Country  
October 25



Three incredible singers join an all-star group of musicians to celebrate some awesome country music in three-part harmony! You will hear songs like “Before he Cheats”, “Jolene”, “Man, I Feel like a Woman”, “How Great Thou Art” and many more great hits by female country stars, with a few surprises along the way! Starring Heather Strickler, Chelsee Hick and Vanessa Helms. This is a group that performs at CPAC and Gaslight Theater in Tucson. This is a chance to see them in our very own mountain setting!

