



Shape the Future

Canyon Chatter

Friends of Madera Canyon

September 2026



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A Western Diamondback Rattlesnake is basking in heat radiating off the asphalt after the sun has set. This behavior makes them susceptible to traffic.

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.

From the President

Brush Piles in the Canyon

Have you noticed a large number of brush piles appearing throughout Madera Canyon? These are not misplaced beaver dams or giant thatching-ant piles. They are there for fire mitigation.

The Coronado National Forest has been busy reducing overgrown vegetation throughout the canyon to protect infrastructure and natural resources from a catastrophic wildfire. The piles in the canyon are primarily made up of pruned tree limbs, thinned brush, and, occasionally, even debris from human activities. The piles, sometimes referred to as “slash piles,” will be allowed to cure for 1-2 years allowing time for them to fully dry out.

Then, under managed conditions, the piles will be burned. There are several criteria evaluated in the hours leading up to a burn, including smoke dispersal conditions, weather, adequate staffing and fuel moisture. Burning the piles is the final step in the process of reducing undergrowth that feeds forest fires and makes fire suppression easier.

Even when there is an unplanned fire, the existence of the slash piles in an area assists firefighting efforts by reducing the amount of fuel underfoot and thereby the speed by which fire travels across the landscape.

Currently, the philosophy is to keep wildfires small to best protect communities. Forest Service Chief Tom Shultz recently shared with Congress, “that every wildfire has a full suppression strategy using both direct and indirect tactics.”

A Land Ethic

In *A Sand County Almanac*, Aldo Leopold wrote, “Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land.” The last chapter lays out his belief that humankind needs to develop a “land ethic” to stand side by side with ethics regarding other aspects of life. He argued that land is too often viewed as a commodity to be exploited, bought and sold by private parties with their own economic purposes in mind. Rather, he said, land ought to be considered as a community asset, suggesting the need for people to share a mutual respect for Earth in order not to destroy it.

The news of the latest salvos fired by politicians regarding the size of National Monuments and the idea of selling part of a National Park to a private developer drove me back to Leopold’s book. It is regarded as one of the most important books on conservation written, and I recall being attracted by the “commodity versus community” distinction when I first read it.

In the history of the Friends of Madera Canyon, I found a time when a man whose family had owned acreage in the Canyon for many years tried to have the parcel re-zoned so that he could build somewhere between eight and twelve new homes. The location was near what was then known as Roundup, now called the Wrightson Parking and Picnic Area. Then FOMC President Lew Denny, the Board of Directors, and FOMC members led the opposition, ultimately winning a unanimous vote at the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors not to grant the re-zoning request.

Private property, then, squared off against public lands. Strongly held values were in competition with each other. How do you find harmony in an atmosphere of competing values? Wasn’t this, and the aforementioned news stories an example of commodity versus community?

Leopold argued that defining and implementing a land ethic was an important step in the work of making decisions about the land. He wrote:

“The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters,



Aldo Leopold (January 11, 1887 - April 21, 1948) was an American writer, philosopher, naturalist, scientist, ecologist, forester, professor, conservationist, and environmentalist. He taught at the University of Wisconsin and is best known for his book *A Sand County Almanac* (1949), which has been translated into fifteen languages and has sold more than two million copies. Leopold was influential in the development of modern environmental ethics and in the movement for wilderness

plants, and animals, or collectively: the land. This sounds simple: do we not already sing our love for and obligation to the land of the free and the home of the brave? Yes, but just what and whom do we love? Certainly not the soil, which we are sending helter-skelter down river. Certainly not the waters, which we assume have no function except to turn turbines, float barges, and carry off sewage. Certainly not the plants, of which we exterminate whole communities without batting an eye. Certainly not the animals, of which we have already extirpated many of the largest and most beautiful species. A land ethic of course cannot prevent the alteration, management, and use of these 'resources,' but it does affirm their right to continued existence, and, at least in spots, their continued existence in a natural state. In short, a land ethic changes the role of *Homo sapiens* from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow-members and also respect for the community as such." Whether Leopold's vision of a land ethic is right or not is a matter of opinion. Forging a consensus about what constitutes harmony between men, women and the land seems a worthwhile endeavor.

Dan White

Sky Island Field Notes from Your Executive Director September 2026

Little Things, Big Impact

There's a particular kind of magic that happens after dark in the Santa Rita Mountains — and this month, it happened for a group of kids who may not have expected it.

When our local 4-H club gathered for a Bug Night, Dave Hawks, Judy White, and Dan White volunteered their evening to make it unforgettable. As the blacklight flicked on and the sky went black, the excitement was immediate: moths and beetles began arriving out of the darkness, and suddenly, a handful of curious kids were fully absorbed in viewing and catching insects many of us walk right past.

The timing couldn't have been better. With the American Snout butterfly migration in full swing and butterflies seemingly everywhere in the Canyon this season, having an expert on hand to share real knowledge — not just enthusiasm, but genuine expertise — turned a fun evening into something kids will remember.

I call this a superpower: the willingness to show up, share what you know, and hand your curiosity to the next generation. Dave, Judy, and Dan didn't just teach a Bug Night — they helped a group of young naturalists fall a little more in love with this place that we all call home.

It's easy to notice the big projects and milestones. But it's these small, generous moments — a blacklight, a few hours after dark, someone willing to answer “what's that?” for the hundredth time — that slowly but deliberately build the next generation of people who care about Madera Canyon and beyond.

I've been reading Doug Tallamy's *Nature's Best Hope*, and it's changed the way I see nights like our Bug Night. Insects aren't just fun to look at under a blacklight — they're the foundation on which nearly everything else in the Canyon depends. Tallamy points out that the vast majority of terrestrial birds rear their young on insect protein, not seeds or berries. No insects, no baby birds. No baby birds, no next generation of the songbirds that draw so many visitors to Madera Canyon in the first place.

Tallamy's other big idea is that habitat doesn't have to be a national park or a wilderness area to matter. Native plants — even a few, even in a small yard — can support dramatically more insect life than the manicured, non-native landscaping many modern homesteads have adopted. Multiply that across enough yards, trailheads, and public land, and you get something Tallamy calls a “Homegrown National Park”: a patchwork of ordinary spaces doing extraordinary ecological work, simply because people decided caterpillars and beetles were worth making room for.

That's what made watching those kids crowd around the blacklight so meaningful. They weren't just entertained — they were getting a first, visceral sense that insects matter. That the moths and beetles arriving out of the dark are not incidental to this place, but essential to it. If we want the Canyon's birds, and the visitors who come to see them, to still be here in twenty years, cultivating that kind of curiosity in the next generation is essential.



And it isn't just a once-a-year event. This is exactly what our Friends of Madera Canyon Education Volunteer Docents do every single time they lead a group of fourth graders into the Canyon for a field trip: turning kids' attention to the small, overlooked things, and letting a little bit of wonder do the rest. Bug Night was one especially memorable version of something our volunteers do all the time.

Thank you, Dave, Judy, and Dan. And thank you to everyone who gives their time and expertise in and out of the Canyon. It matters more than you know.

What's Your Superpower?

Maybe you don't have a blacklight and a love of beetles—but you've got a superpower of your own, and Madera Canyon could use it. We're recruiting for a few key volunteer roles, and training is included for all of them.

Membership Coordinator

Help grow and nurture the FoMC community. This role keeps track of our members, welcomes new ones, and helps make sure everyone who supports the Canyon feels connected to it. Great fit for someone organized who enjoys building relationships.

Volunteer Coordinator

Be the friendly face that connects willing hands to the work that needs doing. This role helps recruit, schedule, and support our volunteers—matching people's interests and skills to the projects that need them most. Perfect for a natural connector who likes helping others find their place.



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An American Snout Butterfly. The nose on these butterflies is composed of mouth parts. Some butterfly biologists put the Snouts or American Snouts in the subfamily Libytheinae (the Snouts or Long Beaks). There are only about eight species of snouts worldwide, all in the tropics/subtropics, and although older field guides may list several species of American Snouts, they're presently lumped into a single species that's divided into geographically subspecies. The Libytheidae have a fossil record that is present in rocks 35 million year old. They are well known for making mass migrations. Photo from the National Parks Gallery.

Social Media & Digital Content Coordinator

Help tell the Canyon's story to the world. This role creates and shares posts, photos, and updates that showcase what makes Madera Canyon special—and helps bring new supporters into our community. A great fit for anyone who enjoys storytelling, photography, or just scrolling with purpose.

Every superpower is welcome here—even the quiet ones. If any of these sound like you, reach out and let's talk.

With gratitude,

Kristin Wisneski-Blum

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Executive Director, Friends of Madera Canyon

The Bird Page

MID-MONSOON IN MADERA

Bob Pitcher

August 14, quite early, I'm on my way up to Madera Canyon. It rained heavily in Green Valley a couple of nights ago, and in general the monsoon season of 2026 hasn't been a bust at lower elevations. It's time to see what's going on farther up in the Canyon.

I take my time on the way, exploring into a couple of side roads that lead off to the right before one gets to Proctor Road. Once the rain starts, the grassland birds start to sing here, preparatory to breeding late in the summer. If the rain doesn't come some year, the birds may not breed, since there may be nothing to feed nestlings. Along with a Loggerhead Shrike on the wire above the road, I see a Black-throated Sparrow sitting in a mesquite, and a Yellow Warbler flying out of a wash across the field. And I hear two of the birds I was particularly after, a Botteri's Sparrow and a Varied Bunting. I listen hard to Cassin's Sparrows, but they seem to be uncommon this year, and I don't hear one.

The most noticeable wildlife on the way up, though, wasn't birds of any sort, but clouds of winged ants. Aroused by the rains, they streamed over the road, not quite high enough to avoid what sparse traffic there was. They sounded like light sleet hitting the windshield.

I meet Doug Moore, Rusty Lombardo, and Luis Calvo of the Chuparosa Inn at the Wrightson parking area, for our walk up the Carrie Nation Trail. With better rains this year, at least in the valley, Doug wants to see how the birds, bugs, reptiles, and flowers are faring higher up.

As we started along the trail, we noted the excellent trail work recently finished by the Friends, and shook our heads over the continuing erosion of the slope below the upper picnic area. The efforts at reseeding that area are not yet readily seen.

It was immediately clear that the Carrie Nation might be more crowded than usual today. It's day 3 of the Tucson Birding Alliance's Southeast Arizona Birding Festival, which attracts birdwatchers from all over. Rusty and I had helped staff the Friends' table at the Festival the day before, and Doug would be on duty there the next day. Most everybody we spoke to at the Festival expected to go up to the Canyon before the meeting was over, and there were a good many on the trail, hoping to see THE TROGON.

The first groups of birders we saw, though, staring intently down toward the



Botteri's Sparrow from Lake Patagonia.
Photo by Alan Schmierer



The black-vented oriole has a disjunct distribution, with populations in Sonora, Sinaloa, and western Chihuahua in northwestern Mexico. Other populations are found in Durango, Coahuila and Nuevo León in north-central Mexico south through central Guatemala, the northern tip of El Salvador, and southern Honduras into western Nicaragua. The species also occurs in Arizona and Texas in the U. S. Photo by Amado Demesa and Wikipedia.

creek and into the oaks, were after a real rarity. A Mexican stray, the Black-vented Oriole had been heard – and clearly recorded -- near there the previous day, only the third record of the bird in Arizona. (As of this writing, the oriole has not been heard again – or seen at all.)

We went slowly on up the trail. It's in good shape. Not only has the trail maintenance made a difference, but the rains have not been strong enough to effect much new erosion. Evidently, many of the recent August thunderstorms formed over the Santa Ritas but then moved down into the valley without providing a lot of moisture to the Canyon. The creek was dry, and there wasn't even any water in the potholes. That's unusual for mid-August -- though it was even drier here last year.

Everything was green, but a lot of the flowering plants had not yet started growing their flower stalks. There were no lilies out, and no columbine. Several kinds of wild geranium were out, however, along with little patches of verbena and bright red Scarlet Betony and Bouvardia. What looked like a good crop of Alligator Juniper berries was ripening along the lower slopes. Generally, though, the Canyon still needs good rain.

As with Carrie Nation, there were relatively few birds to begin with. We did have a good look at one of the Canyon's prizes, a Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, which posed for half a minute at the top of the sycamore snag. And we heard the always present White-breasted Nuthatches, Painted



Red-faced Warbler from the Warblers of North America, National Geographic 1917.

Redstarts, and Acorn Woodpeckers, along with the flock of Mexican Jays that patrols the upper picnic area.

Once beyond the steep rocky section of the trail, we saw and heard a little more. There were a pair of Hepatic Tanagers, and a Hermit Thrush clucked from the opposite slope. Some birds regularly seen along here just seemed to be missing, though. No House Wrens, no Spotted Towhees, no Plumbeous Vireos, no flycatchers of any kind after the one Sulphur-bellied below. Some of this might be accounted for by the fact that in late summer, with breeding mostly over and birds going into molt, they're generally quieter. But with attention, one usually sees more than we were seeing. I recall that last year, with hardly any rain in the Canyon, insect-eating birds seemed all to leave the middle reaches of Madera, to look for bugs elsewhere during the last part of the summer. That may be the case this year too.

We did begin to hear trogons calling back and forth – three at least, possibly four. And we saw parties of intent trogon-seekers and exultant trogon-finders. One or two male trogons were along the trail, and periodically visible. As usual,

they seemed oblivious to people.

We rested at the second stream crossing before we started back down the trail. No standing puddles here either, let alone running water. There were some good flowers, however, a single bright yellow Sundrops blossom, and a few beautiful dark Red Cinquefoil flowers. There were few bugs to be seen, and hardly any butterflies all morning. Doug noted that butterflies generally stay put unless the sun is out, and this morning it generally wasn't. Still, as the humidity had brought out new growths of mushrooms and shelf fungus, there were gatherings of fungus beetles and a few of their larvae eating away at the stuff. These are members of the Pleasing Fungus Beetle family, the *Erotylidae*. Those we saw were dark, almost black, with a myriad tiny gray spots on their backs.

Halfway down, we ran across a small mixed flock of little birds: a family of Painted Redstarts, at least one pair of Red-faced Warblers, a couple of Bridled Titmice, a Hutton's Vireo, and more nuthatches. It's a treat to see the redstarts and Red-faced Warblers together. One or two of the redstarts were juveniles, black with a little white trim, and no red on them yet – perplexing when one first sees one. For at least a quarter mile of our return, one of the trogons paced us, calling all the way, often posing for pictures, and thrilling several large groups of birders up from the bird festival.



To the left, a Trogon watches for birders who are looking for him.

Jaguar Update

This is based on an article published in the Arizona Star on August 30, 2026, written by Tony Davis. The article reports that there are two female jaguars living just south of the international border. Female jaguars have been very rare in the US and conservationists are excited at the prospects of having a breeding population of jaguars in the US.

Tucson biologist Ganesh Marín captured two jaguars on remote cameras at the Cuenca Los Ojos preserve spanning Sonora and Chihuahua, less than a mile apart and about five miles south of New Mexico. One, Lola, photographed in April 2023 and reviewed in September 2025, may be the northernmost confirmed female jaguar in decades. If females reach the border and mate with males that have appeared intermittently in Southern Arizona since the 1990s, jaguars could begin recolonizing the U.S.

Marín says this depends on keeping binational wildlife corridors open, but expanding U.S.-Mexico border wall construction threatens those routes. New wall projects in Arizona and New Mexico

could block jaguars and other large mammals, including bears, mountain lions, bighorn sheep, and deer. Conservationists note that existing vehicle barriers are passable, while the new 30-foot wall and small wildlife openings are not suitable for large animals.

Marín's 85-camera network has documented multiple male jaguars and two likely females, Lola and Adela, in rugged San Luis Mountains foothills near the Chihuahua border. Experts cited by Marín largely agreed Lola appears female, though some Tucson-based jaguar researchers urged caution, saying more evidence or DNA would be needed for certainty.

Marín and adviser John Koprowski plan to publish their findings by the end of 2026. They believe the evidence for Lola is strong while acknowledging that some uncertainty remains.



A female jaguar in Sonora waiting to cross the border.

Book Reviews

A Lost Canyon

DeGroote, D. 2026. Lost Canyon, in the Northern Santa Rita Mountains, the story of Rosemont Valley's Barrel Canyon. Soft cover, all art work is black and white, 54 pages. Green Tree Productions LLC, \$15.

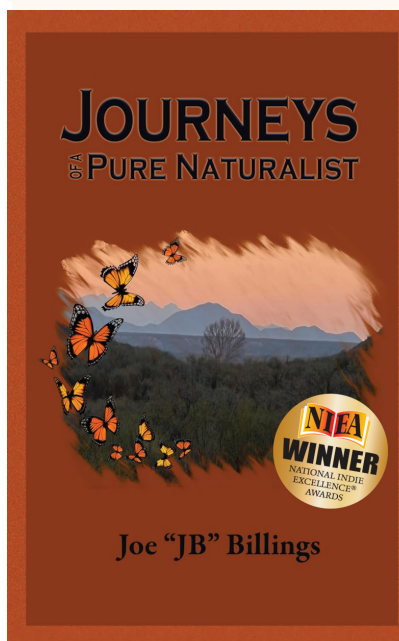
David DeGroote has published his most recent book, *Lost Canyon*, in the Northern Santa Rita Mountains. He provides the reader with an overview of the canyon in three chapters. Chapter 1 discusses the wildlife and trees, the results of a Barrel Canyon Bioblitz. The first chapter also is a look at four endangered species in the canyon, and the water supply. The second chapter looks at human history in the canyon and its impact on nature. It covers the range of hunters and gathers to European settlers, and early to modern miners. Clearly written to engage the reader and stimulate curiosity.

A Pure Naturalist

Billings, Joe “JB” 2025 *Journeys of a Pure Naturalist*. Monarch Quest AZ, Vail, Arizona. Soft cover, 253 pages. Available from Amazon.com

How does one become a naturalist? In *Journeys of a Pure Naturalist*, readers join JB—a seasoned naturalist and self-described twenty-first-century cave man—on a journey through the natural world. This collection of travel tales invites outdoor enthusiasts to explore the untamed landscapes of southern Arizona, Mexico, and beyond. The readers hike through the complex botany of the Sonoran Desert; up rocky escarpments, canyon walls, and remote mountain enclaves beyond the desert and into the pristine waters of the Sea of Cortez, where remote archipelagos off Sonora and Baja California Sur teem with marine life. The pages also echo with the stories of legendary

cowboys, explorers, missionaries, and fierce warriors, as well as encounters with fascinating underwater creatures and extinct Pleistocene megafauna. Richly enhanced with maps and historic color photographs, this collection reflects JB’s deep knowledge of and profound connection to the wilderness, making it essential reading for anyone passionate about nature and eager to experience the world through the eyes of an expert explorer.



Only briefly mentioned in this text is a remarkable project accomplished by the author, a six year study of monarch butterflies. The details of this effort should be required knowledge for southwest naturalists. Billings relies on a mix of boots-on-the-ground fieldwork and public data retrieval. JB tagged butterflies during six field seasons as MonarchQuestAZ, while tracking down at least 100 tagged monarchs (including dozens of his own tags) from all tagging programs along the California coast and in the Mexican monarch preserves. JB used careful netting, precise anatomical tag placement on the hindwing’s discal cell, and rigorous data logging to track monarch butterfly migration. These tracking efforts rely on regional networks and citizen science recovery data to map complex western flight trajectories.

He (JB) tagged and tracked wild monarch butterflies by conducting extensive backcountry bushwhacking expeditions on foot throughout remote and rugged terrain in southeastern Arizona and parts of Mexico. Operating under his project name, MonarchQuestAZ, he has single-handedly captured, tagged, and recorded data for more than 6,000 wild monarchs.

Unlike programs that rely on captive-raised butterflies, Billings focuses exclusively on tracking 100% wild monarchs. He treks deep into remote canyons, desert gullies, and mountain ranges (such as the Santa Catalina and Dragoon Mountains) where monarchs stop to feed on native

milkweed or roost during their autumn migration.

How do you tag a monarch butterfly? JB uses small, lightweight, weather-resistant orange adhesive stickers. After securing a wild butterfly with a net, Billings applies the sticker directly to the discal cell (the mitten-shaped cell) on the underside of the monarch's hindwing. This specific placement ensures that the tag does not interfere with the butterfly's flight aerodynamics, balance, or weight. For every single monarch he tags, he logs the precise date, geographic coordinates of the release, the sex of the butterfly, and the tag's unique alphanumeric code.

JB traveled to coastal California overwintering colonies and Mexican monarch preserves to meticulously search through thousands of clusters to recover tags. He has successfully tracked When everyday citizens or other naturalists spot and photograph his distinct orange tags along migration pathways, they email the registry listed on the tag to log the location.

The scientific impact of Billings' field-intensive tracking led to a major breakthrough in monarch biology. In 2019, he published a paper in the *Journal of the Lepidopterists' Society* proving that Arizona acts as a unique migratory pivot point. His tagging data revealed that monarchs traveling through the exact same locations in southeastern Arizona split paths—some fly west to overwinter along the California coastline, while others fly south to central Mexico.



A monarch butterfly on swamp milkweed. Photo by Jim Hudgins/USFWS.

The Editor's Desk

Navigation and Relocation of Rattlesnakes

Animal navigation enables many species to find their way across the landscape without human technology, species including Arctic terns, monarch butterflies, and salmon migrating thousands of miles. Early theories like dead reckoning, proposed by Darwin, suggested navigation using speed and direction. Research in the 20th century revealed that honey bees use the Sun, sky polarization, and Earth's magnetic field, while homing pigeons rely on multiple cues such as the Sun, magnetic field, olfaction, and vision. Some seabirds, like the Manx shearwater, can navigate using celestial cues. Many animals combine different sensory inputs, including landmarks, magnetic fields, olfaction, and echolocation, to form internal maps for navigation. However, human activities, such as pesticide use and artificial lighting, can disrupt these natural navigation abilities in species like bees and turtles.

The last week of August an opinion article in the *Green Valley News* used a research paper (Nowak et al. 2002) to make the public aware of the impact of moving rattlesnakes that show up in your yard. Relocated rattlesnakes tend to get lost if they are moved more than two kilometers or about 1.24 miles from their point of capture. In the paper, Nowak et al. (2002) conducted radiotelemetry studies to evaluate the effects of the translocation of nuisance western diamondback rattlesnakes (WDR) at two separate locations in Arizona, between 1994 and 1997.

Relocating “nuisance” rattlesnakes from public and residential zones to undeveloped areas is becoming a more frequent management strategy in the southwestern United States. However, there are concerns about whether these translocated snakes adapt to or survive the relocation process. Nowak et al. (2002) independently carried out radiotelemetry studies to assess the impacts of rattlesnake translocation at two distinct sites in Arizona. In north-central Arizona, at Montezuma's Castle National Monument (MOCA), one of the authors (EMN) monitored 19 WDR's fitted with transmitters, and compared seven snakes moved 2 km away from the MOCA visitor center with seven non-translocated controls. In southern Arizona, within the Tucson Rural Metro Fire District, two of the authors (TH, JM) observed 97 individually marked rattlesnakes, including seven telemetered WDRs. Due to various limitations in this latter study, only descriptive data on post-translocation effects are available. Despite differences in study design and locations, the findings complement each other. In both cases, most snakes traveled farther and more often after being relocated, leading to larger activity ranges. At the protected MOCA site, few statistically significant adverse effects of translocation were observed, and over half of the rattlesnakes returned to their original displacement sites. Nevertheless, survival rates for translocated snakes were low. At the heavily urbanized Tucson location, few translocated snakes were recaptured, and mortality rates were high. The findings carry important implications for managing rattlesnakes in public spaces and for creating more effective long-term strategies to ensure safe coexistence between rattlesnakes and humans.

Within the decade, Walker et al. (2009) documented the successful relocation of a suburban timber rattlesnake population in Johnson County, Kansas. They tracked the movements of telemetered timber rattlesnakes over a two-year period as part of a den-relocation project. In

February 2007, the 25-year-old den near Lenexa, Kansas—constructed from road rubble and covered with about 1 meter of dirt—faced imminent destruction due to plans for a large retail development. The study had two primary objectives: (1) to preserve this snake population, and (2) to evaluate a new conservation approach—relocation. Previous research involving smaller groups of snakes and different relocation methods had suggested that relocation was generally not an effective conservation strategy. However, a revision in the development plan saved the original den site, which is now part of a Lenexa city park. Not all timber rattlesnakes using the den were captured during the initial relocation, and occasionally some snakes caused public concern by inhabiting areas near homes.



A close-up of a neonate western diamondback rattlesnake. JCM

Harvey et al. (2014) used the eastern massasaugas for the repatriation experiment. They had 27 snakes captive-born, raised for four years, and released into a nature reserve previously known to host massasaugas. Other than being relatively sedentary, snakes behaved normally upon release in that they engaged in reproductive behavior. Survival (70%) was relatively high until hibernation (19 weeks). However, none of the snakes that did hibernate ($n = 19$) survived into the following active season. In a preliminary assessment of the effects of short-distance translocation, snakes that were moved 200 m from capture locations ($n = 4$) did not return, nor did they exhibit abnormal movement or basking behavior relative to non-translocated controls ($n = 7$). The different outcomes of their two relocations could indicate that the success of relocation depends on the extent of displacement and the source of relocated individuals, although corroborating evidence is needed before these results can be used to support management strategies.

Short-Distance Translocation (SDT) is moving a snake a short distance, typically remaining within its known home range. Long-Distance Translocation (LDT) is moving a snake completely outside its home range into unfamiliar territory. Mitigation/Conservation Goals used to save individual snakes from human-wildlife conflicts, reduce lethal removal (such as being killed by a shovel), or supplement struggling populations with new genetic stock (as seen in recovery projects like those for the Arizona Game & Fish Department).

In summary, effects and risks related to snakes' homing abilities and stress result in them moving long distances exposing them to weight loss and increased risk of predation. Snakes that are relocated over long distances frequently undergo considerable stress, increased hormone levels, and notable weight loss as they attempt to return to their original territory. Increased mortality on species such as timber and prairie rattlesnakes indicate that relocating them far away can greatly raise death rates and disrupt their usual movement behaviors. Recommended methods advise relocating nuisance snakes only short distances or within their existing home range to improve survival chances and avoid the hazards of placing them in entirely unfamiliar environments.

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Licensed masonry contractor needed

Friends of Madera Canyon seeks to retain a licensed masonry contractor for stone restoration in the canyon. The project entails the replacement and repair of stone steps, as well as some wall work constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the 1930s. We are collaborating with the Forest Service on this endeavor, with a projected commencement date in the fall. Interested parties are requested to contact David Linn at david.linn@friendsofmaderacanyon.org or 269-598-6415.



NOT representative of the job.

Partner Spotlight: Revecca Rioux

A new Recreation Specialist for Nogales Ranger District. Friends of Madera Canyon is excited to welcome Revecca Rioux as the new Recreation Specialist for the Nogales Ranger District, Coronado National Forest — the district that oversees Madera Canyon.

Revecca isn't new to Sky Island recreation. She previously worked with the Catalina Ranger District and at Sabino Canyon, giving her first-hand experience with the same mix of high-visitation trails, sensitive habitat, and community partnerships that define Madera Canyon.

In her new role, Revecca will help guide recreation management, permitting, and on-the-ground coordination across the district — making her a key point of contact as FoMC continues its work alongside the Forest Service.

"We're looking forward to building on the strong relationship between FoMC and the Ranger District with Revecca in this role," said Kristin Wisneski-Blum.

Welcome to the canyon, Revecca!



Revecca Rioux

Education Page

Doug Moore

Saturday August 22, the Arizona Native Plant Society Botany Walk on Nature Trail

Every summer since 2015, Doug has met with members of the Arizona Native Plant Society for a monsoon botany walk in Madera Canyon. This year Doug and ANPS members hiked the Nature Trail from Wrightson Trailhead to Amphitheater (retracing the steps of the 2015 botany walk!).

This section of Nature Trail winds through shady side canyons of Madrean Pine/Oak Woodland & across sunny traverses of Interior Chaparral, revealing an impressive diversity of plants. With seasonal rains having “greened up”, the group was able to identify well over 100 species of trees, shrubs, grasses, & wildflowers!

Flowers were particularly numerous & showy in the dappled shade of the oaks & pines- yellow-orange Amber Lily, blue Pinewoods Spiderwort, scarlet Santa Catalina Paintbrush, pink Bushy Tick Clover, yellow San Pedro Daisy, & many others lit up the trailside vegetation. On the more exposed, sunny Chaparral slopes, the group was able to ID specialties like Southwest Coral Bean, Palmer’s Agave, Sotol, Arizona Rainbow Hedgehog cactus, & Wright’s Pin-cushion cactus. With his plant expertise, participant Dr. John Scheuring helped everyone sort through the many different species of grasses along the trail. The plant highlight of the walk was a handsome Tall Milkweed, *Asclepias elata*, in full bloom at trailside.



ANPS walk- hiking the Nature Trail traverse. Photo by Doug Moore.



Tall Milkweed, *Asclepias elata*.
Photo by Doug Moore.

Dreams & Rumours

A Fleetwood Mac Experience



The Last Two Concerts of 2026

Music in the Canyon: Two Shows Left This Season!

Don't miss the final two concerts of Music in the Canyon at the Proctor Ramada, located at the Visitor Information turn-off at the entrance to the canyon. Shows run 3–4:30pm, tickets are \$40, and seating is limited — they sell out fast!

October 25 – Women of Country

All American Girls, A Celebration of Women in Country Music! Three incredible singers — Heather Stricker, Chelsee Hicks, and Vanessa Helms — join an all-star band for three-part harmony hits like “Before He Cheats,” “Jolene,” and “Man, I Feel Like a Woman.”

November 1 – Dreams & Rumours: A Fleetwood Mac Experience

An unforgettable tribute to Fleetwood Mac, starring Chelsee Hicks and Clay Whittington, featuring the songs that defined a generation — from “Dreams” to “Go Your Own Way.”

Tickets are available through our website: <https://friendsofmaderacanyon.org/music-in-the-canyon-2026/>. All sales are final, first-come first-served. Questions? Call Carole de Rivera at (847) 702-5101.

The Last Page



The Western Hercules beetle, *Dynastes grantii* is considered the largest beetles in the US, being both heavier and longer than other beetles. They are 50 to 85 millimeters (or 2.0 to 3.3 inches) long, these measurements including the male's horn. They are distributed in the southwestern United States (primarily Arizona, southern Utah, and southern New Mexico) and southward into northwestern Mexico.

They inhabit arid and desert mountain regions, and are often associated with ash trees. Adults consume sugary liquids, tree sap (especially from Arizona ash trees), and fallen fruit. They are nocturnal and are attracted to bright outdoor lights at night. The larval diet is composed of decaying, rotting wood, such as oak or sycamore, which the grubs tunnel through as they grow. The large "horn" of the male is used for fighting other males, females lack horns. Photo by Doug Moore.