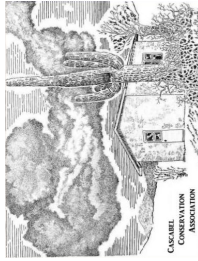


Greetings from Cascabel. It has been another active year since we have sent a newsletter, and we'd like to share some of the highlights with you, our supporters.

Part of the reorganization process last year was to delegate most of the day-by-day, month-by-month decisions and activities to committees that represent our programs: Cascabel Hermitage, Education, Conservation, and our Community Garden. We'll let the chairs of these committees do the talking.



Hermitage Program

by Daniel Baker

Hermitage was the flagship program of our organization when it was founded in 1996, and it remains a vital part. It still seems a unique and unusual effort, but it was envisioned by Jim Corbett and Francis Gonzales-Leitner as a means to help connect people with the earth and invigorate a "biocentric ethic."

CCA typically hosts 20-30 solitary retreatants for between 100-150 retreat days per year, and we have already hosted 26 sojourners for 104 retreat days this year. This program cannot be summarized by numbers though. The responses are uniformly grateful and positive for the meaningfulness of the experience. Beyond the refreshment that simple living in desert wildlands provides, it can also change life directions and orientation as well as educate about the San Pedro River Valley. A recent return sojourner from the urban East noted how it started her on a regimen of camping, and she has kept versed in and supportive of our SunZia efforts.

Seeking the wildness within as well as without makes CCA unique in its holistic approach to conservation. That said it is clear that the hermitage program had a direct conservation purpose in its origins by providing an alternative to a militia group's gun range designs. Likewise, SunZia-like threats make it clear that the opportunity to commune intimately with these desert wildlands requires the conservation of this beautiful, relatively intact and unfragmented landscape.

Education Program Lots that's New, Some Oldies but Goodies Too

by Brandon Weert

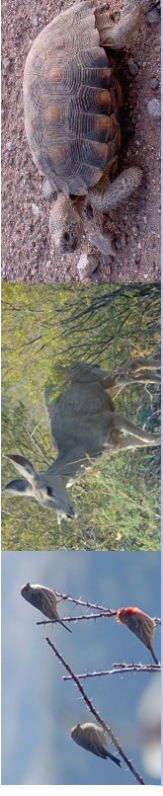


In January the Education Committee met and approved a education project with Jess Rigel (former CHA YAV) and our current YAV, Ellison Cavado. For several months Ellison has been traveling to Benson Middle School to help Jess run an after-school gardening enrichment program for several students. We are excited to see how the year ends up and evaluate the project to consider what other engagement CCA might have with Benson Schools and local youth.

Ellison has also recently commenced a composting toilet project at Sleeping Frog Farms which incorporates David Omick's most recent design. Ellison's first task has been to build the first composting toilet (prototype) at SFF. He is also developing a curriculum that could be used by both SFF and CCA to conduct workshops on the utility, use and construction of composting toilets.

The Mesquite Milling and local foods dinner has been scheduled for Saturday November 9th. We look forward to our 15th year of providing education and facilities to mill locally collected mesquite beans into delicious mesquite flour. Bring your beans, a local dish and be ready for a good time!

The geology walk is well remembered by those who participated in the last one in 2002 and is back by popular demand. The Geology Walk will be led by our own Mick Meader in Hot Spring Canyon. Date and time TBA. Keep your eyes open for an e-mail announcement.



Conservation Program

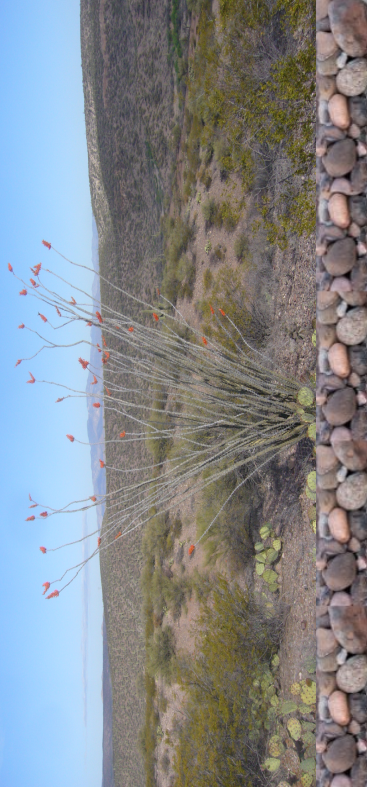
by Mick Meader

The Conservation committee has been engaged in building a collaborative conservation effort in the valley and tracking and responding to issues that pose potential threats to the area such as the SunZia Southwest Transmission Project, the use of the valley for a drone test site and helicopter training missions, and a proposed wind farm in Allen Flat near the Mule Shoe Ranch.

We continue to support and encourage the proposal by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to establish a wildlife refuge and collaborative conservation group in the valley and are seeking ways to address concerns of ranchers and residents.

We joined with the Friends of the Aravaipa Region to create the Lower San Pedro Watershed Alliance, which embraces all valley stakeholders, and is a concerted effort to consolidate conservation interests.

We became a member of the Pima County Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection, have upcoming plans to participate in a Sky Island Alliance wildlife monitoring project, and are supporting the creation of an aerial film designed to showcase the valley's natural value and traditional land use.



Garden News

by Erik Revere

This past fall gardeners reconvened to develop the lower agriculture site at Baicatcan into a community garden.

We were so excited that we started planting our first crops even before we finished the perimeter fence. Throughout the winter we installed the irrigation system, tended crops and planted more, including a 400 square-foot asparagus bed. There has been an abundance of produce this spring and it's been a pleasure to share this abundance with other folks.

Already we are looking forward to the summer season with fresh sweet corn and watermelon. Come join in the fun and camaraderie - there's an abundance.



Baicatcan Land Management Committee

by Jodi Wert

On April 21st many gathered to celebrate the (near) one-year anniversary of the Baicatcan partnership that formed among CCA, Daniel Baker, and the Wert family in 2012. The land itself truly fosters the positive energy and potential for all of the wonderful things that are happening there. In my opinion, Edward Abbey's thoughts best capture this sentiment of Baicatcan holding home for various folks and activities:

This is the most beautiful place on earth. There are many such places. Every man, every woman, (every child) carries in heart and mind the image of the ideal place, the right place, the one true home, known or unknown, actual or visionary — there's no limit to the human capacity for the homing sentiment.

--Desert Solitaire: A Season in the Wilderness (1968)



Invitation to Support CCA

At the beginning of each CCA meeting, our mission and values are affirmed when we share the reflective comments of those who have come to sojourn on the land and participate in the community model of collaborative stewardship. Many describe their experience as "transformative" and "life-changing."

The efforts to realize the unique vision of CCA for the Middle San Pedro Valley are not without cost. We are an organization supported almost entirely by donations and countless volunteer hours.

We appeal to you to add your support to our efforts through monetary contribution, becoming a member and lending your time and talent, or both.

ADD YOUR VOICE TO OUR VISION!
(Please see enclosed materials for more information.)



To: