



2015 Newsletter

# Cascabel Conservation Association

Supporting Conservation, Community, and Contemplation in the Middle San Pedro Valley

Dear Friends of CCA,

Warm greetings from Cascabel, Arizona! We write to send an update on this year's activities, give thanks for the many ways you support CCA, and invite your participation and / or feedback. The following pages offer a peek into each of our programs, as penned from the desk of a CCA member. Enjoy, and we look forward to hearing from you!



## Hermitage

By Daniel Baker

It has been an active and exciting time for the Hermitage program. Last summer 160 acres were donated to CCA to bring the hermitage land to 600 acres. Then a challenge donation was matched that brought in \$10,000 to construct the Jim and Pat Corbett Retreat and Research Center at the Windmill. When complete the Center can be reserved by CCA and Saguaro-Juniper for solitaires, couples, and small groups.

The Corbett Center will be in the style of David and Pearl's homestead with an 8' x 16' cottage, wood stove, rain water catchment and compost toilet. This should help acquaint sojourners with simple living, a desire expressed by a recent sojourner (see reflection) and in the original bylaws:

*It should also be a place where sojourners can learn to live harmoniously within an untamed community of plants and animals and to work in community to care for these lands. In seeking to integrate sojourners into a wild land community, CHA is guided by the need to heal the separation between civilized humanity and the earth.*

Beginning construction of the Corbett Center and maintenance on the Leitner-Gonzales straw bale hermitage is scheduled for later this year.

## Thoughts from the Sojourner's Corner...



Being here [in Cascabel] has affirmed my commitment to do the things I have been talking and dreaming about for years – to live in a place where I can put investments in, to have my daily life be more in line with my values. A place I can install a composting toilet, have solar panels, get a whole bunch of chickens, put in outdoor shower and solar water heater, plant fruit trees connected to grey water system, and have room for hospitality.

Check out this photo from one of the trail cameras – from afar, and then up close!



## Conservation

By Mick Meader



Perhaps our most significant achievement for 2014 was the creation of a Strategic Conservation Plan for the CCA, developed largely by Daniel Baker. What are our hopes and plans the future? Please feel free to request and read this and offer comments. We continued our relentless efforts against the SunZia Southwest Transmission Project, which the federal government formally approved down the west side of the San Pedro River in January 2015. Our greatest chance of stopping it now appears to be the project's lack of economic feasibility. Mick gave presentations on the CCA and Lower San Pedro Watershed Alliance to the Arizona Game and Fish Commission in March and to the Altar Valley Conservation Alliance in May. He also presented a poster on mesquite water use in October at the annual conference of the Arizona Riparian Council and completed a report and information sheet to accompany it. These are now available on the CCA website. We had booths at the Lower San Pedro Ecofest at Winkelman in April and at Tucson Audubon's Bird and Wildlife Festival in August. We also commented on the USFWS's critical habitat proposal for the Yellow-Billed Cuckoo and continued our remote wildlife photography and ORV (off-road vehicle) monitoring project. You can learn more about the project at <http://cascabelconservation.org/conservation/camera-project/>.

## Education

By Brandon Wert



The CCA Education Committee sponsored the 16th annual Mesquite Milling on Saturday November 8th, 2014. Highlights included live music by Lynn Smith-Lovin and Miller McPherson, guests from as far away as the hill country of Texas and excellent local foods including the requisite breakfast of mesquite pancakes and prickly pear syrup. The CCA Board would particularly like to thank Pearl Mast and David Omick for their excellent leadership and coordination of the milling for the past 16 years. While more people have become involved in pulling together the various pieces required to sponsor the milling, CCA is looking for a coordinator to come forward to help with the organization and logistics of the event for 2015.

The winter and spring have seen more activity than usual, with CCA member Anna Lands co-organizing a wild flower walk and informal explorations of the archaeology located at the historical village of Baicatcan. Also, Joe Page is preparing an orienteering course to be established at the Baicatcan camp, which ranges over the 130-acre holdings as well as Hot Springs Canyon Wash.

On March 28th, 2015 the Education committee anticipates an excellent water workshop featuring the research of hydrologist Chris Eastoe relating rainfall amounts to well water levels using isotope tracking and tree ring rainfall data. James Callgary will lead a field study portion for the workshop encouraging participants to put on their scientist hats to make observations of where water surfaces, and how surface water changes habitat.

## Baicatcan Land

By Jodi Wert

The shared camp kitchen ramada is complete, and has been enjoyed by many guests. Father-daughter team Brandon and Lucia finished the project last winter. Cookware, utensils, a grill, and stoves are housed under the ramada, where there is also plenty of shelter from the rain and bright sun. Best of all, folks can marvel at the night sky while bedding down on top of the structure. Lucia has mused about roller-skating and disco dancing up there. ☺ We hope you get a chance to use the kitchen ramada soon – it's there for everyone!

I close with a line of gratitude for Jim Flood's life. He was a good friend, and put a lot of himself into strengthening the Cascabel community. Thank you, Jim! We shared a fondness for Edward Abbey's *Benedicto*, so I'll sign off with the first and last parts of that:

May your trails be crooked, winding, lonesome, dangerous, leading to the most amazing view. May your rivers flow without end... where something strange and more beautiful and more full of wonder than your deepest dreams waits for you --- beyond that next turning of the canyon walls.

## Garden

By Erik Revere



We're now in our fifth planting season at the Cascabel Community Garden. Every season has its stars and this one is no different. With our baskets full of broccolis, asparagus, beets, lettuce, spinach and more, the grocery store seems even farther away than it is. Our goal continues to be to make this garden a peaceful, welcoming and productive place. Won't you join us?

## 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 contributions, 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 learn more about our work in the Lower San Pedro River Valley, please check out our website:

[www.cascabelconservation.org](http://www.cascabelconservation.org)



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