



40-ACRE CASCABEL CONFLUENCE LAND PURCHASE NOW COMPLETED

Thank you to our donors for making it possible—see page 3

Cascabel Conservation Association

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

2019 CCA NEWSLETTER

Hot Springs Canyon Groundwater Up This Year



Alex Binford-Walsh

Hot Springs Canyon in-stream flow station in October 2018

In 2018, CCA began to measure the flow in Hot Springs Canyon near the fish barrier (around 6 miles upstream from the river).

Measurements were taken every few months using an in-stream flow meter, measuring the depth and speed of the water across the stream.

Base flow ranged from nothing at the driest time of the year to over 6 cubic feet per second after the recent winter rains. The strong flow this winter also contributed to a rise in the groundwater table in Hot Springs Canyon.

The groundwater level at the Windmill in Hot Springs Canyon was up 23 ft this spring.



Alex Binford-Walsh

CCA continues to monitor wildlife cameras in the Cascabel area as part of a collaborative project with the Lower San Pedro Watershed Alliance.

Cameras are placed at semi-permanent locations to observe any long-term population or species changes. There are currently 13 cameras spread out along a 15-mile stretch of the river around Cascabel.

To date, the camera project has documented 21 species of mammals (bigger than a cottontail) in the Cascabel area. The data collected is shared with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Saguaro National Park, and the Bureau of Land Management.



Alex Binford-Walsh

Community Garden is Getting a Greenhouse

Our Garden Program has been growing steadily, supplying more of our Cascabel neighbors with fresh organic garden produce, which is a welcome treat in our remote location 30 miles from the nearest grocery store.

Our newest addition is our **custom-built greenhouse**, financed by two generous personal grants, as well as many local donations, and designed and built by two local craftsmen (CascabelBuildingWorks.com Erik Revere, David Omick) who volunteered their time for this extensive project.

Come join us at one of our garden parties and see this work in progress!

Birgit De Gregorio



February 2019: Clearing the site



Birgit De Gregorio

Charlie & his loader making short work of 12 t of gravel

Dave Shreeve



March 2019: Frame is up! (local youth Luca & Elijah)



Birgit De Gregorio

May 2019: Trusses, windows...check!

Birgit De Gregorio



Gail priming and painting the steel frame



Birgit De Gregorio

June 2019: Builders on summer break, to be continued...

Expected date of completion and
move-in: early 2020

A huge “THANK YOU” to all
the donors who made our dream reality!

Cascabel Confluence: What if?

by Katie Talbott

This spring, CCA became the proud new owner of a 40-acre property at the confluence of Paige Canyon, Hot Springs Canyon, and the San Pedro River. All of this happened very quickly and is a testament to the ability of a small, committed organization like CCA to respond to opportunity when it arises. It is also testament to our ability to ask the question, “What if?”

“What if we purchased this ourselves?” And, “What if we asked for help?” The answer to these questions was that through the generosity of CCA members and friends, we raised almost \$36,000 (almost \$3000 more than our goal) in just a little over a month. This allowed us to pay the purchase price of \$30,000, closing costs, and property taxes for several years into the future.

As we celebrate our newest member of the CCA land family, we reflect with gratitude on our gifts. We are grateful that our donors recognized the importance of this parcel. We are grateful for the phenomenal response to our request. We are grateful that the property’s owner, Kai Staats, made every effort to make this purchase work for us.

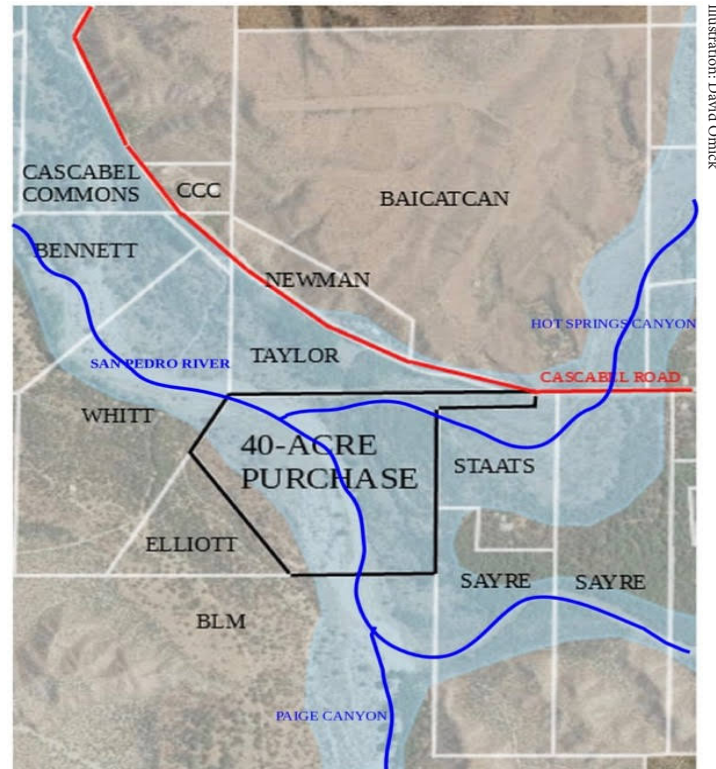
But most important, we are grateful for the land itself. There are “reasons” why this land is “important”. It is next to land with existing conservation easements. It includes a mature mesquite bosque. It is the symbolic and physical center of the east-west wildlife corridor between the Rincon and Galiuro Mountains and the north-south corridor of the San Pedro River. It is visible and accessible, located just across Cascabel Road from Baicatcan and the Community Garden.

However beyond these reasons, the land is valuable just because it is itself.

CCA is not new to being a landowner. We own 600 acres in Hot Springs Canyon, the home for the Hermitage Program. We co-own (with Archaeology Southwest) 130 acres at Baicatcan, the location of an extensive archaeology site, the community garden, and the campground.

But what makes CCA an unusual kind of landowner, in the modern west, is our covenant—a statement of commitment to the land that we adopted from Saguaro-Juniper, one of our sister organizations in the valley, and that applies to the 600 acres in Hot Springs Canyon.

Now that we are faced with the question of what’s next for the Cascabel Confluence land, it seems like a good time to revisit the vision of the covenant. (We have printed it on page 4.) According to this vision, as “landowners” we are not masters or directors of the land. Instead, the covenant



This map shows the parcel (labeled “40-acre purchase”). It is almost entirely in the flood plain, and includes a mature mesquite bosque as well as cottonwood and willow trees. It is contiguous to BLM land to the south, and the private property to the northwest and southeast have Forest Legacy Conservation Easements (labeled Whitt and Sayre on the map).

invites us to be partners. As partners, we are in *relationship* with the land, a relationship in which each party has agency and personal authority, in which all the inhabitants of the land have a place at the table, and in which all of us are bound inseparably together.

In the coming year, we will be talking together about what grows out of our new relationship with this land. This is another opportunity to ask the question, “What if?” Several ideas have already been proposed. *What if we built a small wildlife blind and drinker for use by naturalists? Or a simple hermitage, to add to the Hermitage Program?*

Or a walking trail? Or partnered with other organizations like Audubon or BLM? Or what if we left the property untouched as wildlife habitat?

We welcome your participation in this conversation, and in all matters of care and love for this unique valley home of ours.

(Nature photos taken on Confluence land see next page)

“As partners, we are in relationship with the land...”

Illustration: David Omick

For additional Confluence property photos, visit

<<https://photos.app.goo.gl/LPmTNpmxUFLCKRNo7>>

Kai Staats



Tom Talbott Jr.

THE SAGUARO-JUNIPER COVENANT PREAMBLE

In acquiring private governance of land, we agree to cherish its earth, waters, plants, and animals in a way that promotes the health, stability, and diversity of the whole community. This entails attentive stillness to meet and know the land as an active presence. It entails study, observation, shared reflection, and cumulative corporate experience to increase and bequeath our understanding of ecosystem health, stability, and diversity. It entails symbiotic naturalization into the land community – a communion of actual nurture and shelter. As elaborated by these entailments, fully accountable governance – stewardship – is the distinctively human way of bonding into one society with all who share in the land’s life, which is the foundation for instituting a biocentric ethic among humankind.

Tom Talbott Jr.



(cc-by-nc-sa) Tom Talbott Jr.

Birgit De Gregorio



Land for sale: Part of Mick Meader’s bequest to CCA was his Cascabel land. We are looking for a conservation-minded buyer for this approximately 20-acre upland parcel near Hot Springs Canyon, with shared well and solar water pumping system. Asking \$40,000. **Contact Chris Eastoe** <eastoe@email.arizona.edu>, 520-791-7430.

Birgit De Gregorio



Birders’ Delight: CCA is selling another San Pedro Valley property (NW corner of E Nevada Dr & S Nucci Ln, Hereford) donated by a valued long-time member: 4.9 acres, well share, electric/phone to lot line, gorgeous unobstructed Huachuca mountain views, zoned RU-4; secluded but easy access to Riparian National Conservation Area/Sierra Vista. Asking \$21,000. **Contact Chris Eastoe** <eastoe@email.arizona.edu>, 520-791-7430.

Mick Meader Conservation Endowment Fund

...continuing and expanding the conservation capacity of the Cascabel Conservation Association

This is a board-designated endowment which grows by donations. A board-determined percentage of the funds (e.g. 50%) will serve as cash reserves for the stability of the association. Beyond these reserves, funds will assist volunteers and further conservation projects. An endowment committee is tasked to receive, manage, and disperse funds.

Invitation to Support the CCA

Cascabel Conservation Association is flourishing due to generous donations and tireless efforts of talented volunteers. However, serious threats to the San Pedro Valley continue to come from many fronts, and the current political and conservation climate in our country poses many barriers to our efforts.

CCA remains dedicated to our unique vision for the Middle San Pedro River Valley. Realizing this vision comes

with mounting costs. We remain an organization supported almost entirely by donations and volunteers. *We appeal to you to join us in our efforts by monetary donation, or by becoming a member and volunteering your time and talent, or both.*

Please see the enclosed materials for more information, and **add your voice to our vision!**



CCA Challenges Proposed Development

CCA continues to collaborate with EarthJustice and other conservation organizations to hold the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers accountable to do a complete analysis of the environmental impacts of the proposed **Villages at Vigneto**. CCA is party to a lawsuit challenging the Corps having

issued the necessary Federal permit for Vigneto, a massive planned community proposed upstream of Cascabel on the outskirts of the City of Benson (pop. c. 5000). For more details, visit www.cascabelconservation.org and click on Resources.

Educational Event Highlights 2019

Learning about Pre-Columbian Cultivated Agaves

Wendy Hodgson, Research Botanist at the Desert Botanical Garden, shared with Sweetwater Center, CCA, and the local community on Jan. 18th her discoveries of descendants of pre-Columbian cultivated agave. Forty-five people gathered at the Cascabel Community Center to share a potluck lunch and learn about the agaves that grow in our area. Wendy then demonstrated how citizen scientists can help her investigate pre-Columbian cultivated agave in the San Pedro River Valley on Feb. 16th. Twenty-seven members of Sweetwater Center, CCA, and the Cascabel community braved blustery weather to join Wendy for a morning in the field.



Birgit De Gregorio

Wild agaves, such as this one, produce viable seeds

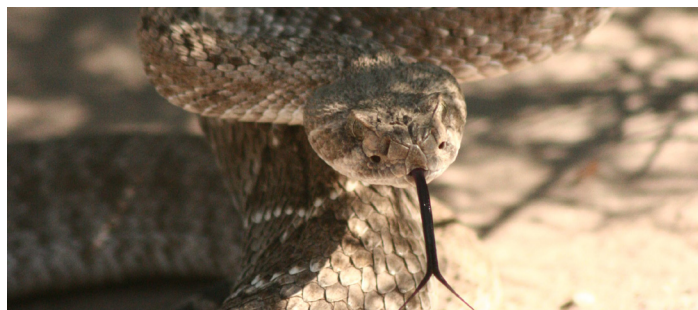


Birgit De Gregorio

Agave san-pedroensis; heavily banded leaves & clones

Rattlesnakes as Agents of Seed Rescue and Secondary Dispersal

Herpetologist Dr. Gordon W. Schuett, of the Chiricahua Desert Museum, shared some of his knowledge about Cascabel's eponymous reptiles with residents on Mar. 30. Two dozen attended the event and learned that rattlesnakes disperse seeds, harvest water, and keep Dr. Schuett busy researching and publishing. The snakes disperse seeds when they eat rodents with seeds in their cheek pouches; the seeds can survive the trip through the snake and germinate. Keels, or ridges, on rattlesnakes' scales catch raindrops that provide drinking water for the snake. The event was co-hosted by the Sweetwater Center and CCA.



Alex Binford-Walsh

Rattlesnake flicking its tongue to gather scents



Birgit De Gregorio

Precious cargo: Palo Verde undergrowth after the rain

Hermitage Program

by Susan Tollefson, Program Coordinator

“Allow / Quiet Joy / Slow / Today / Gift.

These are some of the words that have come to me in these days alone at the Corbett Retreat Center. Alone comes from the words “all-one,” and I have had moments of “all-one” with this beloved community – birds, rocks, buzzing insects, sun, moon and yes, even the prickly plants that tear at my arms and legs. These teachers remind me to slow down, notice, be here, right here, right now. Nowhere else to be, so sit and stay a while. My prayer is that I will find ways to tend and nourish the seeds planted here, in my soul; seeds of allowing, noticing, quiet joy, slowing and murmuring gratitude for all that is. May it be so as I ease back into my human community.”

Since 1996, the Hermitage Program has been dedicated to providing an opportunity for solitary desert retreats. The initial by-laws stated that it would 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.”

Over 20 years later, we continue to steward the land and make it available to those who seek solitude in our crowded and busy world. This year, we have embarked on a passive rainwater harvesting project at the Corbett Center. Many years of drought have taken their toll on the mesquite bosque and other native flora in the area. Our objective is to work with nature and create passive rainwater harvesting structures to redirect and slow down the flow of sheet flooding on the grounds surrounding the Corbett Retreat Center in order to create the conditions which would rejuvenate and enhance the bosque.

To assist in this effort, we will be initiating “Sojourner Volunteer Days” throughout the fall, winter and spring months when there are no retreatants, where small groups of 2-6 people can come for the day and work with us. We will shuttle folks to the Corbett Center, provide lunch, and enjoy each other’s company as we actively labor to conserve the area for future sojourners. Specific dates have not yet been established but if you have an interest in participating please email me at <smtollefson51@gmail.com> and you will be notified of prospective plans. If you are unable to be present but would like to support this effort, donations to the CCA Hermitage Program are always welcome.

Please remember that the Corbett Retreat Center is available to solitaries, couples and small groups. For more information/reservations, go to the Cascabel Conservation Association website at <<http://cascabelconservation.org>> under Programs/Retreats.



Birgit De Gregorio



Cascabel Conservation Association

6146 N. Canyon Road, Cascabel, Arizona 85602

Contributing Editors: Alex Binford-Walsh, Birgit De Gregorio, Anna Lands, Pearl Mast, Karen McKelvey, David Omick, Cindy Salo, Katie Talbott, Tom Talbott Jr., Susan Tollefson

Production: Birgit De Gregorio (web support: Dave Shreeve)

Proofreading: Gail Loveland, Sue Newman

Graphic Design: Michael Puttonen

JOIN THE CCA TODAY!

MISSION

The Cascabel Conservation Association is dedicated to the collaborative stewardship of the Middle San Pedro River watershed in a way that promotes the health, stability and diversity of the whole community, including its earth, waters, plants, and animals. We strive to integrate the needs of the land with the needs of a sustainable human community through educational, economic, agricultural, contemplative and other conservation related endeavors.

COMMUNITY

CCA opens itself to the community. It has a friendly and supportive relation with the Saguaro-Juniper Corporation, sharing a common Covenant, adjacent land and similar purposes. It also partners with the Lower San Pedro Watershed Alliance, Cascabel Community Center, the Cascabel Working Group, and is a member organization of the Lower San Pedro Collaborative, the Land Trust Alliance, and the Coalition for Sonoran

Desert Protection. Furthermore, it is open to you. CCA operates in a consensual manner and your voice and participation are welcome.

FINANCES

In keeping with its integrative approach to the human and natural community, CCA seeks simplicity, equality and justice in financial matters, offering all services at no fee or minimal cost. CCA is run primarily by volunteers, and staff members work for minimal or no compensation. Nonetheless, financial support is required for expenses (such as office, infrastructure, insurance, vehicles, etc.) and the sustainability of our programs.

We would like to invite your participation in CCA by becoming a member (no fee required), or by donation (no membership required), or both. Donations are tax deductible.



Cut here and return the form below.

CCA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I, _____ [PRINT], wish to become a member of the Cascabel Conservation Association: **Supporting Conservation, Community and Contemplation in the Middle San Pedro River Valley**. I understand that I will receive announcements of CCA meetings, minutes, mailings and invitations to participate in events and decision making. (If you were a CHA member, you are already a CCA member)

MEMBERSHIP AGREEMENT: I support the mission of the Cascabel Conservation Association (see above), am in accord with its efforts to function in a consensual manner, and agree to abide by applicable covenants and/or conservation easements when on CCA lands.

SIGNED _____ DATE _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

CCA DONATIONS

- I would like to make a monetary donation to CCA. *(Please specify if you want your donation to go to the General, Hermitage, Garden, or Education Fund. For Conservation Fund: see below).*
- I would like to make a donation or bequest to the **MICK MEADER CONSERVATION ENDOWMENT** fund.
- I would like to help at CCA work parties. Please contact me when they are scheduled.

Please make checks payable to CCA and return to: CCA, 6146 North Canyon Road, Cascabel AZ 85602