



Gambel's Tales

The Newsletter of the Sonoran Audubon Society

Volume 4 Issue 6

February 2003

Hassayampa River Preserve Letter

This is a letter we received from Pat Graham of The Nature Conservancy.

Dear Friend of the Hassayampa River Preserve,

Since our last correspondence about the Hassayampa River Preserve we decided it was important to take a step back before moving any further in looking for a partner, like the Desert Caballeros Western Museum, to work with us and serve you at Hassayampa.

We felt there was a need to clarify our goals for the preserve and also to engage our members and volunteers in the process. In December, we created an advisory committee made up of a cross section of Conservancy members, volunteers and community representatives. They have been meeting with us to help create specific goals for conservation of the preserve, environmental education, etc. and criteria against which we can evaluate potential partnerships. When this is complete we will provide this information to you in another update as well as to the Museum and other potential partners that have or may express an interest.

In an earlier update, I also informed you that our science review was still in progress evaluating the potential use of livestock as part of educational demonstrations at the preserve. That review has been completed and we have concluded that the potential for attracting cowbirds and the resulting parasitism was too great a risk to allow any livestock on the preserve or on any land that might be conveyed to a partner in the future.

In short, we are beginning with a fresh slate and building consensus about what we all want to see happen at the preserve. The next step will be to see whether a suitable partner or partners can be identified to help meet these goals.

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At our next meeting....

Wednesday February, 12 at 6:30 p.m.

An Overview of the Maricopa County Park System, With a Focus on Lake Pleasant

By

Rand Hubbell and Terry Gerber



Terry Gerber:

Terry graduated from Arizona State University with a degree in Business Administration and ASU West with a degree in Recreation and Tourism Management. His major was in the field of wilderness management. He received his Outdoor Leadership Certificate from Northern Arizona University through the Wilderness Education Association.

He spent his first twenty years in retail grocery management. But as he said "my heart was just not in that career." Having enjoyed working a summer for the National Park Service at the Grand Canyon in his early years, he found him self wanting a career in the outdoors. This lead him to gaining a second degree and going onto working for Maricopa County Parks.

This is his seventh year with Maricopa County Parks.

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Hassayampa River Preserve Letter

In the meantime, the good will and dedication of our volunteers is allowing us to keep the Visitor Center open as their schedules permit. The preserve trails are still open from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM, Wednesday through Sunday, and a self-serve kiosk offers trail guides, maps and a sign-in register.

Thank you for your continuing interest in helping us protect the Hassayampa River Preserve and the lands and waters that give it life.

Sincerely,

Patrick J. Graham

State Director of The Nature Conservancy of Arizona

Hassayampa River Preserve

By Chuck Kangas

I know that many of you are interested with what's happening to the Hassayampa River Preserve. It seems like a long time ago that The Nature Conservancy announced that they were proposing to sell a portion of the preserve to the Desert Caballeros Western Museum. What a bomb shell that was! In an earlier newsletter we reported the results of the joint meeting of The Nature Conservancy and the Desert Caballeros Western Museum in Wickenburg. At that time it appeared that it was a "done deal" although the Conservancy kept repeating that it wasn't. When the Chairman of the Arizona Board of The Nature Conservancy said at that meeting that he thought the sale was a win-win situation it left all of our members feeling very uneasy.

The letter campaign that we then started has had its result as you can see by reading the letter from Pat Graham. I think we should all again thank Roxie Campbell for making us aware of the proposed sale. It was because of her messages to the Nature Conservancy and to all of us that there was a step back. It's now apparent that the process that the Conservancy is going through is what should have been done originally.

What we need to do now is work together to have the Audubon Society take over the visitor center at preserve. I hope that between the Sonoran Audubon Society along with the Prescott Audubon Society and with the backing of the Arizona Audubon Council we can accomplish this undertaking.

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An Overview of the Maricopa County Park System, With a Focus on Lake Pleasant

A majority of that time has been spent on developing the environmental education facility at Lake Pleasant called the Desert Outdoor Center. Currently Terry serves as the Interpretive Ranger for Lake Pleasant Regional Park.

Since enjoying the outdoors have always been a way of life for Terry, he has found it quite easy to volunteer for outdoor related projects. He is an avid runner and bicyclist and not only has competed, but also has helped develop some sporting events in Arizona. He has helped direct several events for some of the local sporting organizations in Arizona. He has also volunteered many hours on helping build trails on our public lands as well as being a charter member of the Arizona Trail project.

Rand Hubbell:

Rand graduated from ASU in 1977 with a B. S. In marketing. After a number of years working for various private companies, in June of 1993 he became an Outdoor Programmer with Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department. In April of 1996 Rand became one of the four Special Event Coordinators at the City of Phoenix, served as Chairman of the Electric Light Parade for two years, was in charge of fireworks and security at the Fabulous Phoenix 4th for three years, chairman of vending at Sunday on Central and coordinated the Opening Ceremonies, and basketball competition at the Senior Olympics for 2 Years.

In 1998, he returned the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department and now serves as the Marketing Coordinator for the department. He supports all the regional parks, the special events and supervisors. Rand currently serves on the Planning Committee of the McDowell Sonoran Land Trust in Scottsdale, the Arizona Tourism & Sports Authority - Youth & Amateur Sports Advisory Committee and the Arizona Watchable Wildlife and Tourism Association - Steering Committee.

Rand Hubbell will present an overview of the entire Maricopa County Park system.

Terry Gerber will present an over view of Lake Pleasant and discuss the preservation and limited utilization of riparian areas within the park and how the Sonoran Audubon Society can possibly be involved in helping with future projects.

A message from your president...

I was scheduled for seven Christmas Bird Counts this year. I don't believe I have ever done more than five previously. I couldn't make the seventh count because a cancellation by my driver. It was perhaps just as well; the six counts sort of did me in. George Wall wrote an account of three Christmas Counts we did together. Dick Fogel, George Wall, George Drew and I also did the Puerto Peñasco, Mexico Count and had a wonderful time. I also did the Tres Rios Count and the Salt/Verde Rivers Count.

I hope many of you look though the many interesting field trips that Eleanor Campbell and the Field Trip Committee have put together. Also, those of you who have access to the internet, check out the field trip reports on our web page. Unfortunately, there isn't enough room in the newsletters to include all the field trip reports.

I believe the field trip to Colorado will be a first for any Arizona Audubon Society. I hope a number of you will consider going on that trip. Those of you who know Bob Bradley are familiar with all the work he puts into his trips. He'll work very hard to make sure that we see all our target birds. Eleanor and Bob will work on a plan to make a stop and do some birding on our way up to Colorado.

Eleanor spent a night at Greyfeather's Lodge north of Silver City, New Mexico to scout it out. She says it's a Wonderful location. There are forests, stream and lake right there and several habitats within 20 miles making it a good starting off site. Full breakfast is included at \$45.00 per night per room. There's a conference room and we can have breakfast early if we want. Eleanor is looking at the end of May for a SAS field trip to the Lodge.

SAS Web Site: www.sonoranaudubon.org

Join Sonoran Audubon Society.....

New Adult or Family membership: \$20.00

Seniors and Students: \$15.00

Renewal fee for Students and Seniors: \$15.00

Mailed Newsletter subscription : \$8.00

Fee includes membership in the National Audubon and your local Sonoran Audubon Societies, and a subscription to the Audubon magazine. Your check should be made payable to the National Audubon Society, along with the membership form, preferably obtained from the Sonoran Audubon Society and containing our chapter ID number B07.

The Sonoran Chapter newsletter, Gambel's Tales, may be obtained free from the chapter website <www.sonoranaudubon.org>, or by subscribing for a mailed hard copy. Web site recipients will be notified when each newsletter is posted if the chapter has your e-mail address. Send your membership name and e-mail address to <chuckkan@mindspring.com>. If subscribing for a hard copy, send check (\$8.00), made payable to the Sonoran Audubon Society, to Sonoran Audubon Society, P.O. Box 8068, Glendale, AZ 85312-8068. Please include your address, and telephone number.

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TREASURER'S REPORT

29 January 2003

This report is submitted for publication three times per year as required in the Chapter By-laws and by acts of the Board.

| SONORAN AUDUBON SOCIETY | BUDGET TO DATE | |
|----------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| | 10/02/2002 | 01/29/03 |
| INCOME | \$ | 5192.00 \$ 2,346.89 |
| NAS dues return | \$ | 2300.00 \$ 2012.75 |
| Chapter sources | \$ | 2892.00 \$ 334.14 |
| Projects | \$ | - |
| EXPENDITURES | \$ | 5192.00 \$ 2,799.58 |
| Fund-raising Activities | \$ | 200.00 \$ - |
| Committees | \$ | 2400.00 \$ 820.20 |
| Projects | \$ | - \$ - |
| Chapter Operations | \$ | 1307.00 \$ 603.38 |
| Insurance | \$ | 960.00 \$ 1376.00 |
| Arizona Audubon Council | \$ | 325.00 \$ - |
| CHANGE IN CASH | | \$ (452.69) |
| ASSETS AND LIABILI- | | |
| TOTAL CASH | | \$10308.23 |
| ENCUMBERED FUNDS | | \$ 611.15 |
| CLEAR FUNDS | | \$ 9697.07 |

The report is available in greater detail and answers to specific questions about it and items in it are available from the Treasurer. Joshua A. Burns, Treasurer josh-a-burns@yahoo.com

Spring 2003 Field Trips

Sonoran Audubon strongly encourages carpooling on all outings!

Please organize your own carpool, consolidate vehicles at meeting places, and/or contact leaders for carpooling assistance. Sonoran Audubon strongly encourages carpooling on all outings!

Field Trips are rated in difficulty levels one, the easiest, to five, the most difficult. It is recommended that passengers reimburse drivers at an agreed rate.

REMINDERS: Don't forget water, sunscreen, hats and insect repellent. Wear neutral colors. Avoid bright colors. Wear sturdy walking shoes

Difficulty: 1 Morning only. Call leader for time and meeting place.

Saturday, February 1

Tres Rios Wetlands

Leader: Daniela Yellan 602 942-7791

dyellan@aol.com

This wetland complex at 91st Ave. on the Salt River in Phoenix is among the best places to find birds in the West Valley. Expect to find herons, raptors, passerines and wintering waterfowl in the varied habitats found there.

Difficulty: 1 Bring Spotting Scope, if available.

Contact leader for details, meeting time and place.

Saturday, February 8

Salome Road/Arlington Valley

Leader: Carolyn Modeen 623 972-6273

ctmodeen@juno.com

Search for several species of thrashers and gnatcatchers known to be found in this desert habitat west of Phoenix. Then visit Arlington Wildlife Area. A variety of sparrows, raptors and other field birds should be seen.

Difficulty: 1 Bring a lunch.

Contact leader for meeting place and time.

Saturday, February 15

Gilbert Ponds/Wildlife Center

Leader: Dwayne Fink 480 967-9202

Visit the Gilbert area wastewater recharge facility ponds for wintering waterfowl and shorebirds. A bird list of more than 140 species has been compiled there including more than 50 species of water/shore birds. Black-necked stilts, American Avocets and Sora have nested there.

Difficulty: 1 Bring lunch and spotting scope.

Tuesday, February 18

Coon Bluff/Granite Reef Dam

Leader: Betty Baugus 623 412-1215

betty-baugus@webtv.net

These sites on the Salt River in Tonto National Forest always provide good habitat for ducks, herons, hawks and Bald Eagles.

The mesquite forest is home to wrens, woodpeckers, phoebes, juncos, and sparrows as well as flycatchers---even in winter.

Difficulty: 1 Bring lunch and spotting scope.

This is a combined Birders Anonymous and Sonoran Audubon trip. Meet at Bell Recreation Center, Hutton Drive, Sun City to LEAVE at 7:00 a.m.

Call leader for details.

Saturday, March 1, 2003

Audubon Environmental Education Center

Leader: Dwayne Fink 480 967-9202

Explore the site of a future Audubon Environmental Education Center under construction in downtown Phoenix. Audubon Arizona is working with the city of Phoenix on the Rio Salado Project to preserve the river and riparian habitat. The proposed facility will be at the corner of Central Ave. and Rio Salado and the preservation will encompass land from 24th St. to 19th Ave.

Difficulty: 1 Morning only.

Call leader for meeting place and time.

Saturday, March 15, 2003

Ox Ranch

Leader: Tom Lazzelle 602 843 8451

We will visit a working, diversified, ranch on the road to Hillside northwest of Wickenburg. The ranch is on Date Creek. When the present owners bought the ranch, Date Creek had been over-grazed by cattle. Working with the Heritage Fund and Partners for Wildlife, the owners have restored the riparian area and stream to a proper functioning condition. For their efforts, the owners received the Arizona Game and Fish Department's "Stewardship Award" in 2002.

Upon arrival at 9 A.M., there will be a brief orientation to the ranch, discussing present best management practices for the cattle and farming operations. Trip participants can drive or walk around the 3 acre lake and have lunch there. The leader visited the ranch headquarters and lake area on December first and found Canvasback, Redhead and Bufflehead ducks, Snow and Canada Geese and Pied-Billed Grebes.

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Spring 2003 Field Trips

After viewing the lake, there will be a short drive and a ½ mile walk to Date Creek to look for spring bird migration. Please plan for an all day trip as the driving time is 2 hours each way. The tentative meeting place for map distribution and directions is a Walgreen's parking lot on Grand Avenue in Surprise. Please call the leader in February for an address of the Walgreen's.

Wednesday, March 19, 2003

Badger Springs/Agua Fria National Monument

Leader: George Wall 623 875-7057

WALLABY@worldnet.att.net

Enjoy both desert and a unique riparian habitat at one of our new national monuments. Take an easy 3/4 mile walk to the perpetually flowing river. Petroglyphs enhance the scenery of the site. The monument is an adopted Sonoran Audubon project where volunteers have spent days researching and counting butterflies and plants as well as birds. The Spring Bird Count here revealed 95 species.

Difficulty: 1 Bring lunch.

This is a combined Birders Anonymous and Sonoran Audubon trip.

Meet at Bell Recreation Center, corner of Boswell and Hutton Dr., Sun City, to LEAVE at 6:30 a.m. OR take Rte. 17 north and take Exit 256. Go to paved road and turn right where there is a parking area on left. Meet rest of group at 7:30 a.m.

Saturday and Sunday, April 5 & 6

Gunnison/Grand Junction Colorado

Leader: Bob Bradley azbradley@earthlink.net

See the rare Gunnison Sage Grouse booming on their lek. Look for Three-toed Woodpecker, Pine Grosbeak and Gray Jay at Grand Mesa southeast of Grand Junction. The plan now is to start April 3 and bird en route on Thursday P.M. and Friday...maybe Cortez or Durango area. Bob will meet us at Gunnison on Saturday, April 5th for the Gunnison Sage Grouse and we would drive to Grand Junction for birding Grand Mesa on Sunday, April 6. More details In March's newsletter.

BIRD COUNTS

By George Wall

What a great time we all had!

7 of us – Chuck Kangas, Doug Adams, Dale Litzenberger, Tom Lazzelle, George Wall, Ian Jeffrey, and Helayn Aranguena did the Gila River (Sec 2) bird count on 27 December, 2002. Here is what we saw without the counts – Great Blue Heron, Snowy Egret, Mallard, Ruddy Duck, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Prairie Falcon, Gambel's Quail, Killdeer, Least Sandpiper, Mourning Dove, Great Horned Owl, Black Phoebe, Say's Phoebe, Vermillion Flycatcher, Bewick's Wren, Mountain Bluebird, Spotted Towhee, Abert's Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon Variety), Red-winged Blackbird, Western Meadowlark, Brewer's Blackbird, Great-tailed Grackle, House Finch and 20 Wilson's Phalarope in which we had to make a write-up.

6 of us – Chuck Kangas, Doug Adams, George Wall, Bob McCormick, Josh Burns and Bob Nieman had an area in the Portal bird count on 28 December, 2002. Here is what we saw without the counts – Great Blue Heron, Mallard, Ring-neck Duck, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Long-eared Owl, Scaled Quail, American Coot, Virginia Rail, Sora, Mourning Dove, Greater Roadrunner, Ladder-back Woodpecker, Northern (red-shafted) Flicker, Say's Phoebe, Chihuahuan Raven, Common Raven, Verdin, Cactus Wren, Rock Wren, Marsh Wren, Sage Thrasher, Bendire's Thrasher, Curve-billed Thrasher, Loggerhead Shrike, Green-tailed Towhee, Canyon Towhee, Brewer's Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Black-throated Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, White-crown Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Brewer's Blackbird, Yellow-headed Blackbird, House Finch and a Black-headed Grosbeak.

4 of us – Chuck Kangas, George Wall, Doug Adams and Bob McCormick did a portion of the Peloncillo Mountains (New Mexico) bird count on 29 December, 2002. Here is what we saw without the counts – Great Blue Heron, American Widgeon, Ring-neck Duck, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Merlin, Scaled Quail, Killdeer, Mourning Dove, Greater Roadrunner, Red-naped Sapsucker, Northern (red-shafted) Flicker, Say's Phoebe, Western Scrub Jay, Chihuahuan Raven, Common Raven, Bridled Titmouse, Verdin, Cactus Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, Western Bluebird, Mountain Bluebird, Townsend's Solitaire, American Robin, Northern Mockingbird, Sage Thrasher, Bendire's Thrasher, Curve-billed Thrasher, Loggerhead Shrike, Pyrrhuloxia, Spotted Towhee, Canyon Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Brewer's Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Black-throated Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, White-crown Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon, Pink-sided and Gray-headed types), House Finch, and Black-headed Grosbeak.

That took care of the bird counts, but we still saw other birds on the trip. At the feeder area of Cave Creek Lodge, we saw the Elegant Trogon, Bridled Titmouse, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Pine Siskin, Lesser Goldfinch, American Goldfinch, American Robin, Pyrrhuloxia, Northern Cardinal, Mexican Jay, House Finch, Acorn Woodpecker, Magnificent Hummingbird, and Blue-throated Hummingbird and this was only in a half an hour.

The 4 of us stopped on the way back on 30 December at Wilcox Pond and here's what we saw – Great Blue Heron, Eared Grebe, Northern Shoveler, Common Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Green-winged Teal, Bufflehead, American Widgeon, Ross Goose, Sandhill Crane, American Coot, Killdeer, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, Black Phoebe, Say's Phoebe, and Great-tailed Grackle.

Calendar of Monthly Meetings...

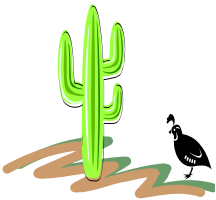
**Location: Auditorium, Glendale Public Library, 5959 West Brown Street
(one block south of Peoria Ave. & 59th Ave. intersection)**

Time: 6:30 p.m.

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|--------------|--|
| Feb 12, 2003 | Rand Hubbell and Terry Gerber "An Overview of the Maricopa County Park System, With a Focus on Lake Pleasant " |
| Mar 12, 2003 | Sandy Anderson, Director, Gray Hawk Nature Center "The San Pedro River-Avian Paradise" |
| Apr 9, 2003 | TBA |
| May 14, 2003 | TBA |

Other Dates of Interest:

Feb 5, 6:45 p.m. Board Meeting at Glendale Library in the small meeting room. All SAS members welcome.



Sonoran Audubon Society

P.O. Box 8068

Glendale, AZ 85312-8068