



Saguaro Rib

www.friendsofsaguaro.org

Friends Provides Over \$825,000 to support Saguaro National Park in 2024!



Thanks to the generosity of our donors in 2024, Friends of Saguaro was able to provide the Park with a record-breaking \$825,428 to protect wildlife and habitat, preserve cultural resources, promote environmental education,

improve recreational trails, enhance visitor experiences, and build environmental stewardship at Saguaro National Park. Friends funding also supported the engagement of 379 volunteers who completed 23,734 hours of service to the Park. Time and talent valued by Independent Sector at \$794,852.

Since our founding in 1997, we have provided over \$13 million in program and project support to Saguaro National Park! This incredible success would not have been possible without the generous support from our donors and volunteers. Thank you!

Friends continued to successfully implement the **Next Generation Ranger Corps Internship Program**. This highly effective and nationally recognized program helps passionate local youth develop the skills and experiences required to pursue a career with federal land management agencies. Since 2015, the program has employed 127 local youth who



receive targeted training, mentoring, and skill-building work experiences. 81% of the graduates achieved Public Land Corps hiring authority and 95% have



gone on to work in the environmental field. 43 currently work for state and federal land management agencies, and 17 work here at Saguaro National Park (25% of the total Park staff). This program is developing future environmental leaders.



In addition to expanding the Parks capacity to complete research, control invasive species, remove old grazing fences, maintain trails and buildings, collect fees, deliver environmental education programs,

and provide over 1 million annual Park visitors with a first-class experience by working 33,516 hours at Saguaro National Park in the last year alone.



Friends funding supported 60 miles of **trail maintenance and rehabilitation** at trails including King Canyon, Manning Camp, Bridal Wreath Falls, Turkey Creek, Tanque Verde Ridge, Pink Hill and many more. Additional work included the replacement of signs on the Arizona Trail, installation of benches on the Freeman Homestead Trail, and universal design features at the Signal Hill Trail and Picnic Area.

Friends funded the Park's participation in over 40 **community outreach and engagement events**. These local events included the



Festival of Books, Rodeo Parade, Holiday Parade, Naturalization Ceremony, Community Speaker Series and many more. The Park's setup features the **Mobile Visitor Center**, which was created through a partnership with Western National Parks Association.

Friends also funded the **Art in the Park Program** which featured interpretive presentations that inspired artistic activities such as poetry, pottery, painting, drawing, weaving, food, and dance. This program facilitates interdivisional collaboration at the Park between the interpretation and resource management teams.



Friends has fully funded all Environmental Education Programs at Saguaro National Park for over twenty-five years including **curriculum-based field trips, hiking clubs, hiking club leaders, camps, cactus rangers, transportation reimbursements, and the new Eco-Discovery Program.** This allows thousands of students from dozens of local Title 1 schools (grades 4-12) in southern Arizona to visit Saguaro National Park each year for free and participate in place-based programs and activities.

Friends supported the Park's **Search and Rescue** efforts by providing emergency medical supplies. Each year Visitor and Resource Protection Rangers, who are all certified Emergency Medical Technicians, receive 25 calls for extensive Search and Rescue events.



Support from Friends allowed the Park to complete the installation and provide **free public Wi-Fi** at each visitor center. The Wi-Fi gives visitors access to digital content and the ability to download the National Park Service App, which provides a custom, self-guided experience at the Park. In addition to increasing visitor safety, accessibility, and reducing the Park's printing needs.

Friends provided funding from the Wildlife Adoption Program to fund a three-year **Sonoran Desert Tortoise Study** to learn about the current population, their home ranges and develop a conservation strategy to protect this vulnerable species. The second year was a success and consisted of the continued monitoring of 15 adult tortoises located in the Tucson Mountain District.



Funds from the Wildlife Adoption Program were used to support **High-Elevation Resource Surveys** for Mexican Spotted Owls and black bears in addition to the maintenance of **wildlife cameras** with real-time

video capability that are set up at 25 priority wildlife corridors and water sources. These cameras are vital in helping the Park document wildlife and develop comprehensive conservation strategies.

Friends supported Saguaro National Park's efforts to build meaningful and sustainable **Tribal Collaboration.**



This included funds for cultural demonstrations, a tribal educator workshop at White Stallion Ranch and the creation of a native interpretation working group. In addition to supporting the U.S. Poet Laureate, Ada Limón's event at the Park, where a local Tohono O'odham poet, Ofelia Zepeda was honored. These efforts were successful in furthering foundational relationships between the Park, local tribes, educators, and



community partners. Many programs funded by Friends support the Park's efforts to reconnect tribal youth to their ancestral homelands.

Friends funded the Park's annual **Volunteer Appreciation Picnic** to celebrate and recognize the important work of volunteers. Volunteers are



vital and help increase the Park's capacity to complete projects and deliver programs, in addition to building a community of passionate, like-minded individuals who are committed to protecting the Park for future generations.

Friends provided funding for the **Dark Skies Celebration, Events and Wayside Exhibits.** In 2023, Saguaro National Park was designated by Dark Sky International as an Urban Night Sky Place, only the second National Park Service site to receive this certification. Support from Friends funded Night Sky Programs, Dark Sky Week celebrations and interpretive wayside signs at the visitor centers.



Friends provided funding from the Adopt-A-Saguaro Program to support the **Saguaro Arms Study.** This large and comprehensive study catalogues each saguaro's location and documents its height, circumference, number of arms, arm height, and arm direction. The data collected will

help researchers create, prove and disprove theories about growth, arm formation, flowering and water storage of the Park's namesake plant.

Friends supported **Wellness Training for Park staff and volunteers** at Saguaro National Park. This training focused on stress reduction techniques, effective communication, conflict resolution and team building exercises.

Friends funded **two internships for Geographic Information Systems (GIS) students.** This partnership with the University of Arizona gave students real-world application of GIS skills, working directly with Saguaro National Park's GIS specialist creating maps, plans and data driven conservation strategies.



Friends partnered with **Wilderness Volunteers** to sponsor a project at Saguaro National Park to remove invasive buffelgrass

and old grazing fences. Wilderness Volunteers is nonprofit that specializes in week-long volunteer projects where volunteers camp at the remove worksites.

Friends funded instructor training, supplies, equipment, and engagement for **Saguaro National Park's Bicycle Ranger Program.** Eco-tourism in Tucson has significantly increased and about 40 cyclists enter the Park each day.

2025 Capital Projects

1 Thanks to the incredible support on Arizona Gives Day, Friends is funding the construction of a mule training pen at Saguaro National Park! This will provide a safe and controlled environment for the mules, outside of the corral, to practice packing, riding, and training throughout the season. In addition to increasing the quality of life for the Park's seven mules; Big Boy, Trigger, Chico, Shorty, Red, Ruby and Bodie.

2 Friends has begun a multi-year project to install solar panels on all buildings at Saguaro National Park. Tucson receives over 350 days of sunshine each year, and this will significantly reduce the Park's energy costs, promote energy independence, reduce environmental impact by utilizing clean and renewable energy and help Saguaro National Park become a national leader in sustainable energy.

Park Report

On behalf of the National Park Service and Saguaro National Park we want to express our sincere thanks to our 379 volunteers in 2024. Volunteers assist in all Park divisions and are essential to increasing the Park's capacity to provide the over 1 million annual visitors with a first-class experience and protect the long-term health of the Park's resources.

We are grateful for your generous support of our official philanthropic partner Friends of Saguaro. They are transparent, accountable, and careful stewards of your gifts. Our collaborative partnership with Friends is amazing. It's nationally recognized and demonstrates the significant accomplishments that can be achieved in a public-private partnership. We are a model for programs and best practices for both national parks and other Friends groups. Thank you for your commitment to help preserve, protect, and enhance the fragile environment and unique cultural heritage of the Sonoran Desert at Saguaro National Park.

- Saguaro National Park Leadership Team



Support the Park with Saguaro and Wildlife Adoptions!

One of the ways you can help FOSNP support the Park is by "adopting" a saguaro, or one of a variety of animal species found in this ecosystem. You can make these adoptions yourself, or present them as gifts for family and friends. We'll put the person's name on an adoption certificate (that includes a picture of the saguaro, or animal species that's being adopted), and send them a letter explaining why the protection of the species at Saguaro National Park is important for biodiversity.

All adoption proceeds are placed in restricted accounts whose revenues are used exclusively to support wildlife and habitat research at the Park. Utilizing our Adopt a Saguaro revenues, we've provided the Park with more than \$95,000 in the past several years to assist with the decennial saguaro census, support the PIT tag identification project, and protect native habitat by removing invasive buffelgrass. Utilizing our wildlife adoption revenues, we've provided the Park with more than \$85,000 in recent years to support Gila monster research, desert tortoise monitoring, bat surveys, and mountain lion, bobcat, and black bear research.

Please visit our website to make an adoption



Executive Director Report



In 2024, Friends of Saguaro was able to provide the Park with over \$825,000 to protect wildlife and habitat, preserve cultural resources, promote environmental education, improve recreational trails, enhance visitor experiences, and build environmental stewardship at Saguaro National Park.

We are participating in the Millions for Tucson Raffle sponsored by the Jim Click Automotive Team. I hope you'll take the opportunity to enter the raffle and purchase your chance(s) to win a new **2025 Kia Carnival Hybrid SX Prestige!** I also want to thank Mr. Click for his generosity to Friends of Saguaro and to the other nonprofits throughout the Tucson community participating in the raffle. Each nonprofit keeps 100% of the proceeds from the tickets they sell, so each ticket you buy from Friends directly benefits the Park. Tickets for this year's raffle can also be purchased on our website.

The ability of Friends to help the Park depends on you – our donors, volunteers, and advocates – and we are grateful for your support. Without your efforts, the Park wouldn't exist as we know it today. If you have any questions, feedback, or are interested in joining our Board, please feel free to contact me directly at (520) 733-8610 or fosnp@friendsofsaguaro.org.

- Fred Stula, MPA

Visitation at Saguaro National Park

Saguaro National Park welcomed 946,369 visitors in 2024. This is the sixth most annual visitors since the Park was created in 1933. There are 433 national Park sites and Saguaro was the 26th most visited park last year.



SUPPORT FOSNP...

And You Could Win a 2025 KIA CARNIVAL HYBRID SX PRESTIGE

With your \$25 contribution you could win one of THREE great prizes!

- Grand Prize is a 2025 KIA Carnival Hybrid SX Prestige
- 2nd Prize is two round-trip, first-class airline tickets to anywhere in the world (subject to conditions)
- 3rd Prize is \$5,000 cash!

Friends of Saguaro keeps 100% of the proceeds from the tickets we sell!

Please visit our website to purchase your tickets

Our Donors

October 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025

Our thanks and appreciation to all our donors during the two last quarters; we apologize for any errors or omissions.

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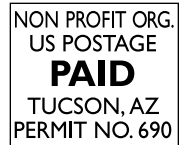
Friends of Saguaro National Park

2700 North Kinney Road
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Website: www.friendsofsaguaro.org

E-mail: fosnp@friendsofsaguaro.org


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Mark Your Calendar!

The **2025 Dinner & Auction** will take place on **Sunday, October 19th** at **Tanque Verde Ranch**.



How You Can Help SNP

1. Visit the Park and participate in a Ranger Guided Program. View the full program list at www.nps.gov/sagu/planyourvisit
2. Sign up to be a volunteer www.nps.gov/sagu/getinvolved
3. Donate to FOSNP to support the projects and programs at SNP www.friendsofsaguaro.org
4. Advocate to protect and preserve Saguaro National Park www.npca.org
5. Sign-up for the monthly FOSNP e-newsletter www.friendsofsaguaro.org



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