

# Canyon Echo



Catalina Wilderness. Photo by Toni Malcolm

**“I want you to act  
as if the house is on  
fire. Because it is..”**

**Greta Thunburg**

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Roosevelt St., Phoenix, AZ 85003.

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the communications assistant. Send

printed copies to: Canyon Echo, 514

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# HEAT PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

by Jazmin Moreno Dominguez



As Arizona heads into another dangerous summer, workers across the state are once again being asked to labor through extreme heat with little protection. Construction workers, landscapers, farmworkers, delivery drivers, warehouse workers, and day laborers are facing rising, life-threatening temperatures every day on the job. Despite experiencing some of the deadliest heat conditions in the country, Arizona still has no enforceable statewide standard guaranteeing workers access to water, rest, and shade.

The Arizona Heat Standards Coalition is a statewide alliance of labor, community, and advocacy groups leading the fight to secure an enforceable state OSHA heat standard. Mandatory rest, water, shade, and heat safety protocols are human rights and long overdue for policy in Arizona. The state OSHA plan, the Arizona Division of Occupational Safety and Health (ADOSH) has the authority to promulgate a comprehensive heat safety standard covering all outdoor and indoor workers. ADOSH has the authority to promulgate .

The AHSC has led the fight to establish workplace heat protections across the state since 2023, helping secure protections for workers laboring under local government contracts in Phoenix, Tucson, and Pima County. Similar protections are also being considered by the Tempe City Council. However local ordinances are just the beginning and the end goal remains as our north star.

Over the past two years, the AHSC has :

- Organized worker listening sessions and community outreach efforts across Phoenix, Tucson, Yuma
- Mobilized workers and supporters to testify at Industrial Commission of Arizona (ICA) and ADOSH meetings
- Participated in Governor Katie Hobbs' Workplace Heat Safety Task Force to advocate for enforceable protections

- Delivered more than 1,500 petitions from Arizonans demanding a statewide heat standard
- Helped secure local heat protection ordinances for workers laboring under government contracts in Phoenix, Tucson, Pima County, and Tempe
- Elevated worker demands for water, shade, rest, acclimatization, training, emergency response protocols, and anti-retaliation protections.

The state is advancing non-binding guidelines, these recommendations still lack enforcement, penalties, and guaranteed compliance for employers. The coalition remains firm that voluntary measures are not enough. Arizona workers deserve a strong and enforceable statewide OSHA heat standard before more lives are lost to extreme heat. At its core this fight is about dignity. As temperatures continue to rise due to climate change, our most vulnerable communities find no refuge from the heat. Arizona workers demand REST. WATER. SHADE.

*AHSC steering Committee members include*

*AFSCME Arizona, Agave Community Threads, Arizona Jobs with Justice, AZ AANHPI for Equity, Care in Action, Mi Familia en Accion, the National Council for Occupational Safety and Health, SEIU, Unite Here Local 11, and Worker Power.*



*AHSC Press Conference. Photo courtesy of Jazmin Moreno Dominguez*



*AHSC Full Coalition. Photo courtesy of Jazmin Moreno Dominguez*



*AHSC Group Photo. Photo courtesy of Jazmin Moreno Dominguez*

# SAME RESULTS, MORE PAIN

by Horst Schmidt



In May, the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC) held another public comment session on the proposed Arizona Public Service (APS) rate hike. This time Arizona's environmental and advocacy organizations and many individual ratepayers came out in force against the 14% rate increase requested by APS. While I waited to testify against the rate increase, I saw the Center for American Progress (CAP) report, A Plan for American Electricity Affordability on how to revamp how we pay for our electrical usage. In it, they reported that:

- Over the past 12 months, 66% of Americans have reported increases in their electricity bill.
- Roughly 1 in 6 households are behind on their bills, and
- Under the current administration's policies, these problems will continue to worsen.
- Based on these and other findings, the CAP recommends the following:
- Creating a rate relief fund for states that freeze or lower residential electricity rates for a limited time (four years)
- Requiring all data centers to pay their fair share

When it was my turn to speak to the ACC commissioners, I highlighted the problems because the Commission typically prioritizes helping monopolistic for-profit utilities above the interests of consumers. What does that mean? In the utility's 2023 and 2024 reports to the ACC, there were about 25,000 households each year who had their electricity shut off from December through April. About half the shutoffs occur in December: Ho! Ho! Ho! Merry Christmas from APS! The report from the CAP does not differentiate between shut offs and the 1 in 6 households having trouble paying their bills. In Arizona, that could be as many as 233,333 households, which can translate into 600,000+ to 900,000+ residents. When you consider rampant inflation and increases in housing costs, how much will the shut off rates and number of consumers behind on their bills increase?

This is what I told the commissioners. Will they listen? We'll find out after the hearings in June, where APS will try to justify their 14% increase request and intervenors will challenge their assumptions. More importantly, will the commissioners act in favor of consumers? They are aware of consumer anger and frustration.

Horst Schmidt is the Climate and Energy Chair for the Grand Canyon Chapter

Footnotes:

(1) Center for American Progress, A Plan for American Electricity Affordability May 18, 2026 ([https://www.americanprogress.org/article/a-plan-for-american-electricity-affordability/?utm\\_medium=email&hsenc=p2ANqtz-EGkO-4WswTWesWfedHO-3Ngk6xi3VO7bCnEH-LF5tD3y5805dW6abuJU0TFVq6AqKmymfOA8Hmm-LY6F57A3DsAw&hsmi=421340520&utm\\_content=421340519&utm\\_source=hs\\_email](https://www.americanprogress.org/article/a-plan-for-american-electricity-affordability/?utm_medium=email&hsenc=p2ANqtz-EGkO-4WswTWesWfedHO-3Ngk6xi3VO7bCnEH-LF5tD3y5805dW6abuJU0TFVq6AqKmymfOA8Hmm-LY6F57A3DsAw&hsmi=421340520&utm_content=421340519&utm_source=hs_email))

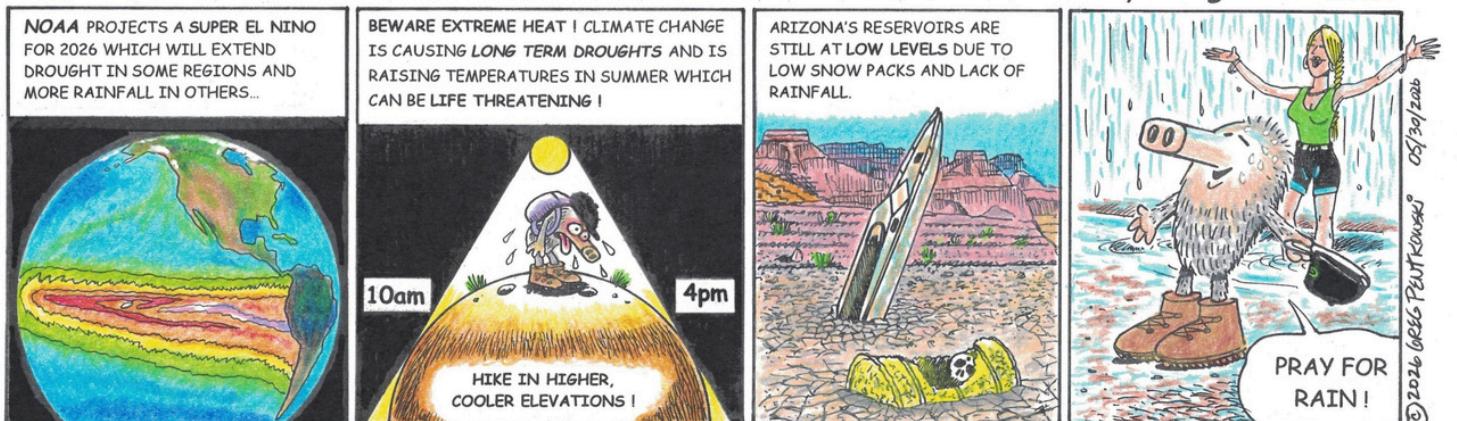
(2) Arizona Public Service Company ELECTRIC UTILITY ANNUAL REPORT UTILITY SHUTOFFS / DISCONNECTS 12/31/23, p. 20 ([https://azcc.gov/docs/default-source/utilities-files/electric/annual-reports/arizona-public-service-company/2023.pdf?sfvrsn=e270280\\_3](https://azcc.gov/docs/default-source/utilities-files/electric/annual-reports/arizona-public-service-company/2023.pdf?sfvrsn=e270280_3))

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## Beyond the Slab

-- CELEBRATING OVER 30 YEARS OF PUBLISHED ECO-AWARENESS !

By Greg Pentkowski





Volunteers, partners, and coalition members gather to send a strong message to the Arizona Corporation Commission - Choose People Over Profit and No Rate Hike! The ACC will decide later this year whether or not to grant Arizona Public Service a huge rate increase and the ability to raise rates every year without adequate oversight.



# Together we CAN and MUST,

# Because the planet is on Fire!

by Kathy Mohr-Almeida, Ph.D.



I wanted to provide an update about the goings-on at Salt River Project since the 2026 Board and Council elections last April. Foremost, I want to express my sincere thanks for the support the Clean Energy Team received from Grand Canyon Sierra Club. As always, our community accomplishes incredible work! We now hold the majority on the SRP board and are actively working on lowering GHG emissions and the mitigation of extreme heat in the Valley, amongst other intentions and goals.



## **Solar River**

I am advocating for what the architect firm Tectonicus Constructs LLC and George Cairo Engineering call a "solar river." These organizations have worked collaboratively with the Gila River community to install three solar-over-canals solar arrays. I met with the very talented engineer Gina Adami from George Cairo Engineering. She took me on a tour of two of the three over-canal solar installations on the Gila River Reservation. She reported that 20 miles of solar panels over the canal system is sufficient to power 175,000 homes with clean energy. Perhaps even more exciting is that the Architect from Tectonicus, Ben Lepley, reported that the panels reduce evaporation of covered canal water by between 50 to 75%. This concept was put together by Lepley's students at U of A in collaboration with a Department of Energy Grant.

This idea is not without controversy at SRP.

A pilot project was considered for installation by the PERA Club, an SRP facility off Continental Road, east of Scottsdale Road, in Tempe. The Federal Government requires SRP to make the canal system accessible for public recreation. SRP management expressed concern about people climbing on the panels, and requested a proposal for taller panel supports, which increased the cost of the pilot. Management reported to the board that the pilot was too expensive and abandoned the idea altogether. When I cited the architect's research about evaporation savings, I was told that the research is invalid because data has not been published to document the savings. The panel arrays on Gila also have gutters to collect rain and channel it into the canals. The structures that support the panels are cantilevered to allow accessibility for canal maintenance.

## **Power Dynamics**

At the last Power Committee meeting, I requested that we revisit the solar river concept, and the CEO, Jim Pratt, gave what appeared to be a knee-jerk response of "Ya, we are not doing that," which is a board, not management, call. Pratt dialed back the intensity of his preliminary reaction and agreed to discuss the matter further. Both Lepley and Cairo are willing to present the proposal to the board, and I am awaiting a response from the SRP Corporate Secretary's office about how to allow guest presenters to the Power Committee. So far, I have not received any response.

## **Shifting Tides?**

We are pushing back and attempting to wrest control of the direction of SRP toward significantly more renewables, while maintaining affordability and reliability. Everyone on the Clean Energy Team understands that our decisions have real-life consequences for Arizona families, and none of us want to increase the cost of energy while we bring our clean energy goals to fruition.

I believe the power dynamics between the board, the council, and management are shifting. The Council recently voted to replace the council seat vacated by now Vice President Barry Paceley. They voted for the Clean Energy Team's replacement choice!

## **Be Friendly**

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at 480-329-8503. I respond expediently to texts and return voice mail within 24 hours. I represent YOU, and I welcome your feedback and suggestions.



Kathy Mohr-Almeida, Ph.D., is a Salt River Project Board member. The views expressed in this content are solely her individual views and opinions, and are not made on behalf of the SRP Board of Directors or Salt River Project Agricultural Improvement and Power District.

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

## ARIZONA LEGISLATURE TAKES NO POSITIVE CLIMATE ACTION

by Sandy Bahr



This legislative session, as with the sessions in recent years, saw no real action on climate change, unless you count the bills to take us backward. Legislators tried to block siting of solar and wind on public lands, tried to establish solar and wind energy as nuisances, and worked to pass measures to further advantage fossil fuels. They did not hear bills to establish a renewable energy standard for all utilities in Arizona. They did not even hear those bills or any of the ones that allow agencies to work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Climate change is affecting our daily lives in Arizona and is contributing to a host of issues, including prolonged drought, decreased water availability, increased pollution, and unhealthy air. Furthermore, climate change exacerbates the impacts of environmental racism, contributes to rising healthcare costs, results in more extreme weather, and leads to loss of wildlife and wildlife habitat. Arizona is one of the fastest warming states in the country and both Phoenix and Tucson are among the fastest warming cities in the country.

The most vulnerable members of our communities suffer the greatest from this extreme heat, contributing to more and more heat-related illnesses and deaths.

The rising temperatures associated with climate change exacerbate drought, expand the wildfire season, contribute to larger fires, and result in increasingly unpredictable and severe weather patterns. These impacts threaten our personal, community, and economic health and safety.

Climate change is also threatening plants and animals, including our native forests and the iconic saguaro cactus, which needs specific conditions to thrive. In recent years, there have been fewer young saguaros in Saguaro National Park due to ongoing drought and extreme weather. Drought, wildfire, and changes in the range of species, among other impacts, threaten forests, including piñon and ponderosa pine forests.

In our priorities document, we asked the Arizona Legislature and Governor take action to:

- Repeal the statute that prohibits state agencies from regulating greenhouse gas emissions without explicit authority from the legislature.
- Repeal laws that preempt local action to regulate fossil fuels and reduce waste.
- Reject any bills that promote fossil fuels to the detriment of clean renewable energy such as solar and wind, and our wallets; legislation that hinders siting of clean energy; and any bills that erect impediments to pollution-free transportation.

As noted above, they did not take positive action, but we are at least hoping that between the legislature and the Governor's veto, the harmful measures will die. We cannot afford to go on without investing in mitigating climate change and making our communities more resilient.

### **We need action-now!**

By Sandy Bahr, Director for Sierra Club Grand Canyon Chapter

Chapter Announcements Summer 2026

**Wildlife Activist Group** Virtual Meetings **July 13th, Aug 10th, Sep 14th** (MON) 7pm

**Climate & Energy Action Team** Virtual Meetings **July 28th, Aug 25th, Sep 22nd** (TUE) 6:30pm

**Arizona Sierra Club Conservation** Virtual Meetings **July 2nd, Aug 6th, Sep 3rd** (THU) 6:30pm

**Grand Canyon (Arizona) Chapter Conservation and Executive Committee July 11th** Location TBD.  
For details and more information, contact Don Steuter at [dsteuter@hotmail.com](mailto:dsteuter@hotmail.com) (Conservation) or Stephanie Vazquez at [stephanie.vazquez03@gmail.com](mailto:stephanie.vazquez03@gmail.com) (Executive Committee)

**Sierra Club Coffee Talks** happen in Phoenix regularly, please check our calendar of events for further details.

<https://www.sierraclub.org/arizona/events-activities>

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We send two Chapter email updates per month, including upcoming events and activities, action items and more.



Grand Canyon Protection Campaign email updates are sent once every other month.



Borderlands email updates are sent every month.



Arizona Water Sentinels email updates are sent once every other month.



Wildlife email updates are sent once every other month.



Energy email updates are sent one every other month.



Legislative updates are sent weekly during the legislative season



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To sign up for the e-newsletter, send an email with your full name and membership ID (8-digit number found on your mailing label) to

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Photo by Toni Malcolm

# IDENTIFYING SEVERE HEAT DAMAGE IN SAGUARO CACTI

by Bill Peachey 

Since the summer of **2003**, when two highly visible symptoms of heat damage in saguaro cacti were initially identified and described in southern Arizona, high heat weather events have been assailing saguaro populations with **central stem bending of their tops** and varying degrees of the heat bleaching **loss of chlorophyll from their skins** (turning them from medium green to lighter shades and even to "banana" yellow in extreme cases). Heat damage changes in skin color are even in coloration and are not to be confused with those of cold damage that presents mottled to patchy patterns with orange to brown coloration. Heat damage often becomes apparent immediately *following* the end of the blooming season.



Fig.1 Lean & color change 2003

One or the other and, commonly, **both** of these symptoms of severe heat damage to saguaros may be seen on a given cactus.

Central stem top-bending in saguaros is caused by water loss. In plants this is known as a "loss of turgor." The top portion of the central stem is especially prone to this because there are **no** strengthening woody ribs in the top several feet of this stem in saguaros. And, so a bent top will never regain its original upright posture. They usually will eventually break off at the hinge point of the bend and that is often at a woodpecker's "boot"-nest excavation.

Severe heat conditions also can destroy the chlorophyll (green) portion of a saguaro's skin. When it does, the "lighter" components of the skin then give it their coloration. In less severe cases chlorophyll will reappear slowly. So far observations of partial recovery after years following severe damage indicate that many more years of time could be needed to complete recovery.

A patch of lightening/yellowing on a stem facing the sun for part of the day indicates damage from a "sun burn" and NOT what we are describing here as general heat damage, which will have caused lightening/yellowing completely around the central stem (and also the "arms" of a saguaro in extreme cases).

As indicated by the included images, a digital camera and employment of a "Kodak" gray scale with more than 10 gradations (the accepted international standard) are all that is needed to assess severe heat damage of a saguaro relative to that of its visibly unaffected neighbors!

1) Take an image of an affected saguaro along with some of its unaffected neighbors—best done with the sun behind you at 8–9am.

2) Then, convert the image to **black & white**.

3) Using the gray scale, compare the "gray values" of the **un-affected neighbors** with the gray value of the lighter one that you suspect has been **affected by heat damage**. If you see a difference of 2 or more values, you have a heat damaged saguaro! The greater the number of gray values difference between them means an **increased level heat damage**.

William D. Peachey – Tucson, Arizona – Saguaro researcher

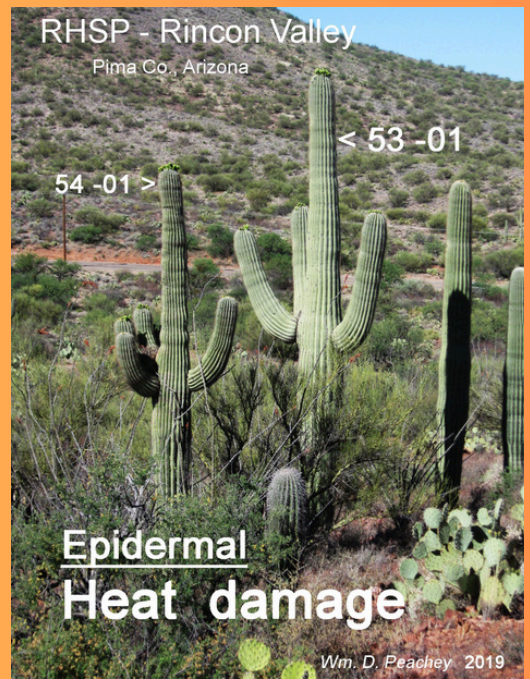


Fig.2 2019 11 Febr.



Fig.3a 2019 11 Febr.

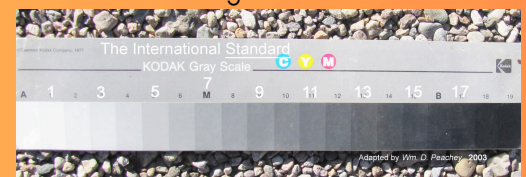


Fig.3b K. Gray Scale

## Volunteer Content Writers and Photographers Wanted

To contribute to our quarterly publication **The Canyon Echo**

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*500 word limit, written content, and photos accepted, all credited.*

*Professional copy-editing services provided, no experience necessary.*

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If interested please contact :

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# IT'S ABOUT THE POLITICS!



## Cast of Characters

Nick Arnold

### **Why don't you tell us a little bit about yourself?**

I use he/him pronouns. I live in Tucson and have been down here for the last 14 or 15 years, but I grew up in the Phoenix-Scottsdale area, so I'm a born and raised Arizonan.

I first got really involved in wanting to save the planet through an energy angle. I did my undergrad in engineering and wanted to work on photovoltaics-solar panels. But through that educational experience, I realized the engineers are doing what they need to do, it's our policymakers that need to get their act together.

I think it's something that's not unique to me, but to millennials as a generation, growing up with the Internet and having exposure to all of the pieces of information about the threats to our planet, the impacts from climate change, and what the rest of my life was going to look like accordingly. I think one of the core beliefs that I've settled on is that every other battle that we have on social justice, other rights, and protections for people -all is secondary to whether or not we have a planet to live on that is habitable for humans.

### **What work or action are you most proud of?**

I think the thing that I'm most proud of is the people that I've helped get elected. I've been very involved with the two environmental lawyers that we've had in the Arizona Legislature over the last 10 years of my career, and it's something that I continue to be proud of, even with the limited impact that they've been able to have. Being able to be part of some of our strongest environmental leaders in the legislature, and how they got to the legislature.

### **What's your favorite place in Arizona?**

When I had my dog, I used to like going hiking out at Sweetwater Preserve in Tucson. It wasn't too intensive for me or my dog's limited abilities. I've also just always enjoyed water. I've not spent as much time at lakes and natural bodies of water as I prefer, but, as unsustainable as I believe it to be to have a backyard pool, I love spending time out at my pool.

### **What keeps you motivated to do this work?**

That's a tough one. Even as things have gotten worse, I think it's watching as more and more people realize that this is a fight, and that people need to be in it. I think lately it's been watching the organic response to Project Blue and the data center development in Tucson, and that people are really motivated to come out and defend our water resources, our affordability of energy to the extent that that's still possible.

### **So, what made you want to volunteer with Sierra Club?**

I think the brand of Sierra Club is something that really matters. Like, I've gotten the chance to work for other groups that don't have nearly the same presence in people's minds, and especially in the landscape of work. And I think being able to lend what is my professional skill set to the broader work of Sierra Club makes the rest of the work I do even better, and overall more effective.



Senator Priya Sundareshan and Nick Arnold.

*Photo courtesy of Nick Arnold*

**If you had a magic wand and you could change one thing in Arizona, what would it be?**

If I could do something that is within the realm of feasibility, I think it would be eliminating all of our barriers to democracy. I think Arizona is a state that wants to do the type of environmental protection work and clean energy transition and water security work that we believe in. If we had representative democracy in a true sense, with full participation, every other battle that we fight would be easier.

**Is there anything else you want to add that you would want people to know?**

I think it's that everything we do is political, and it's something that I think 10 years deep from the 2016 election, more and more people have accepted that reality. We don't have clean water, we don't have clean air, we don't have public lands without engagement in politics in a political system that will protect it. It's easy to think that these are values and circumstances that everybody agrees to, but that's not the reality of things, and whether it's rent, or it's your energy bills, or your water availability, you might not be interested in politics, but politics is interested in you, and that's something that doesn't have to be a dirty thing. It can be a hopeful and strategic thing if that's what we make of it.

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For this amazing list and for those who choose to remain anonymous,





San Pedro River. Photo by Jennifer Martin-McLeod



Photo by Toni Malcolm

The Arizona Water Sentinels conduct water quality monitoring to assess the general health of Arizona rivers. Data is shared with state natural resources agencies and used to inform decisions about better protecting these rivers.

[Join us at one of these events.](#)

### VERDE RIVER OUTINGS

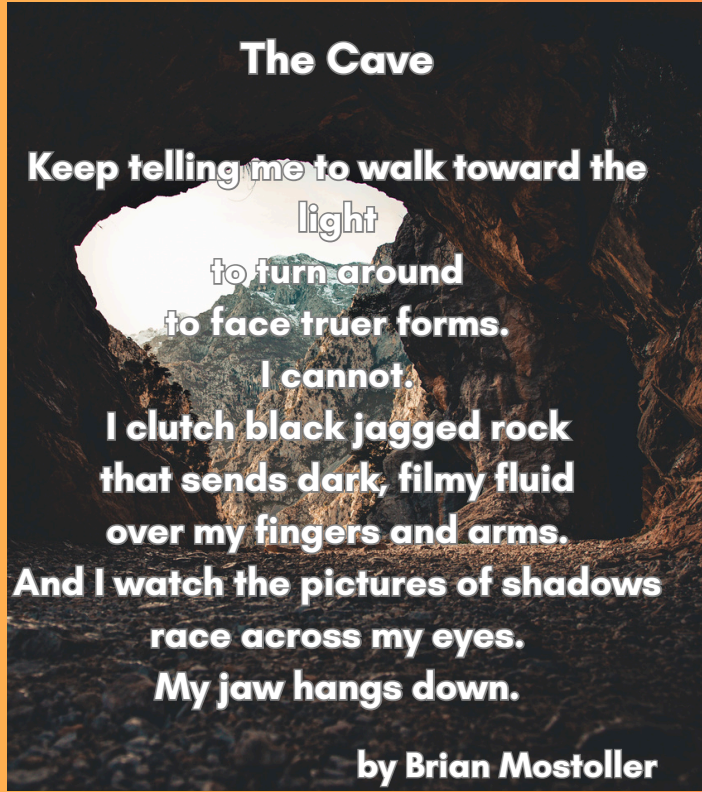
- [July 11](#)
- [August 8](#)
- [September 12](#)
- [October 24](#)

### SAN PEDRO RIVER OUTINGS

- [July 13](#)
- [August 10](#)
- [September 1](#)
- [October 26](#)

### RIO SALADO OUTINGS

- [July 12](#)
- [September 13](#)
- [October 25](#)
- [November 8](#)
- [December 6](#)



## The Cave

Keep telling me to walk toward the  
light  
to turn around  
to face truer forms.  
I cannot.  
I clutch black jagged rock  
that sends dark, filmy fluid  
over my fingers and arms.  
And I watch the pictures of shadows  
race across my eyes.  
My jaw hangs down.

by Brian Mostoller

The Sierra Club is a nationwide organization with active local outings for members and non-members. Please join us as we make friends and explore life-enriching interests. Simply find an outing by date and contact the leader for directions, reservations, time, and additional information. RESTRICTIONS: NO FIREARMS, RADIOS, OR PETS (unless noted otherwise). Outings are by reservation. Call early (group limit 20) Each hike is rated for degree of difficulty and risk by the leader.

- “A” >16 miles or >3,000 ft. elevation change (EC)
- “B” 8–16 miles and 1,500–3,000 ft. EC      RT Round Trip
- “C” 3–8 miles and 500–1,500 ft. EC      OW One Way
- “D” <3 miles and 500 ft. EC

The trip leader has absolute authority to question trip participants as to their equipment, conditioning, and experience before and during the trip.

All participants on Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver. If you would like to read the liability waiver before you choose to participate in an outing, please go to

<http://content.sierraclub.org/outings/local-outdoors/resources> or contact the National Outings Dept. at 415-977-5528 for a printed version. Sierra Club liability covers leaders only. Each person is responsible for his/her own first aid equipment. If you are injured, notify the leader immediately.

If you leave the trip, with or without the leader’s permission, you are considered to be on your own until you rejoin the group. Hikers are encouraged to carpool and share the driver’s fuel expense. Donations are accepted from all participants at \$1 (member) and \$3 (nonmember).

Money is collected by the leader and deposited with the group treasurer. For more information, contact the Sierra Club Grand Canyon office at 602-

253-8633. Hikes and outings are also listed online at

<https://www.sierraclub.org/arizona/events-activities>.

CST 208 776 640.

Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California

# Arizona outings

No outings for July and August, it's too hot!

**SEPT 12, 2026 (SAT)** Time TBA, "D". Community Nature Center (1.5 miles). Easy, pretty trails with Interpretive nature signs, historical artifacts, and great views of Granite Mountain. Parking limited, carpool available. For more information, reservations, directions, and carpooling, contact Outings Leader, Jenny Cobb [cobbsrun@msn.com](mailto:cobbsrun@msn.com) or text/call 928-925-1320.

<https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=701Po0001qEt4blAC> Prescott



Woodchute Wilderness. Photo by Fintoath, Commons-Wikimedia.org



**ARIZONA:** where beautiful places can be protected forever by gifts in wills

Photo by Andrew Cattoir, National Park Service

#### Are you thinking about making an estate plan?

The Grand Canyon Chapter is happy to offer Giving Docs, a simple, secure way to create your will and other estate planning documents online. It's free for Sierra Club supporters—and it only takes a few minutes to create an account and get started.

You can even use Giving Docs to create your Sierra Club legacy by naming Sierra Club's Grand Canyon Chapter as a beneficiary of your plans. This is completely optional. A gift of any size is greatly appreciated!

To learn more about planned giving or to become a member of the Rachel Carson Society, please get in touch! We're happy to help.



Scan the QR code or get in touch to learn more

[julia.curtis@sierraclub.org](mailto:julia.curtis@sierraclub.org)

(800) 932-4270

[myplan.sierraclub.org](http://myplan.sierraclub.org)

**SEPT 19, 2026 (SAT)** Time 0800.

"C" Woodchute Trail- Woodchute Wilderness (6.7 RT, EC 1,007 ft). Enjoy spectacular views of the Verde Valley while navigating through forest and high desert Flora. For reservations, meeting time, carpool and place contact Outings Leader Heidi Alton 480.200.5480,

[threedogzaz@gmail.com](mailto:threedogzaz@gmail.com)

Prescott

Canyon Echo © 2026. Canyon Echo (ISSN 0164-7024) is published quarterly for Sierra Club members by: Sierra Club Grand Canyon Chapter, 514 W. Roosevelt St., Phoenix, AZ 85003. Phone: 602-253-8633.