



Saguaro National Park News Release

For Immediate Release

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February Programs Offered at Saguaro National Park

Saguaro National Park is offering special programs this winter that explore the park's wonderful natural and cultural history. Come along on a naturalist-led evening walk in the park, or join a local expert for a presentation in one of our visitor centers. *Programs are offered at both the east and west districts.*

Interpretive programs are free, but park entrance fees apply. Program schedules are subject to change – call the visitor centers for schedule updates or for reservations.

Special Programs at Tucson Mountain District (Saguaro West)

Feb.1 10:45 a.m. Mysterious Mammals .75 mile, 1 hr. hike

Sonoran Desert mammals are seldom seen, but they are present in great diversity and numbers. Where are they? How do they survive in the desert climate? Come along to learn the answers. ***This program also offered on Feb. 8, 15, and 22.***

Feb.1 1:15 p.m. Birdless Bird Walk*

Take a walk in the Cactus Garden to try and hear a bird call you may not recognize. Even if no real birds actually grace us with their presence, we'll show you what the common birds look and sound like. Perhaps you will see a bird new to you, even if no real birds actually grace us with their presence! ***This program also offered on Feb. 8, 15, and 22. Wheelchair accessible.***

Feb. 2 10:45 a.m. Lost and Gone Forever 1.5 mile, 2 hr. hike.

Learn how species become threatened, endangered or extinct. Explore the challenges and threats facing all creatures great and small in their struggle for survival within Saguaro National Park. What are the consequences of habitat loss or climatic change to those that call this place home? Discover some of the secrets of this desert park. ***This program also offered on Feb. 5, 10, 12, 17, 19, 24, and 26.***

Feb. 6 10:45 a.m. Packrat Wandering .5 mile, 45-minute hike

Walk up a wash from the Visitor Center and search for a packrat home. They tell us about changes in climate, human history, geology, as well as about the inhabitants. ***This program also offered on Feb. 20, 27.***

Feb. 6 3:00 p.m. The D'Anza Trail - guest speaker: Don Kucere

In 1775, Spanish explorer Captain Juan Bautista de Anza was authorized to command expeditions escorting soldiers and their families to establish overland trails from Sonora, Mexico to San Francisco. Since 1990 Don Kucere, the State Interpretive Coordinator for the Anza Trail Coalition of Arizona, has worked as a National Park volunteer to establish a hiking and horseback riding trail that follows the Anza expedition route. The status of walking and horseback riding of this trail in Arizona will be discussed. *Wheelchair accessible.*

Feb 7 10:45 a.m. The Secrets of the Saguaro 1 mile, 1 hr. hike

Have you ever wondered how the saguaro can survive and thrive in this park? What do young saguaros look like? How long do they live? Come and learn about the secret life of the saguaro cactus. ***This program also offered on Feb. 14, 21, and 28.***

Feb. 7 **2:15 p.m.** **Neighborhood Characters** *30-minute nature walk*
See if you recognize plant versions of your friends and relatives as you take a short walk in the Red Hills Visitor Center neighborhood. ***This program also offered on Feb. 13, 20, 21, 27, and 28.***

Feb.10 **1:15 p.m.** **Desert Communication** *1 mile, 1.5 hr. hike*
Desert plants, animals, and people need to communicate with each other in order to create a vibrant functioning habitat. This program will explore the realities and theories of desert communication thru the ages. ***This program also offered on Feb. 17, 24.***

Feb. 23 **2:45 p.m.** **Wasson Peak Moonlight Hike**
This 6½- to 7- hour, 8-mile, round-trip hike climbs 1,700 feet to the highest point in the Tucson Mountains. Enjoy the 360- degree view of the sunset, and then descend by the light of the moon. The hike is at an easy pace but is considered difficult due to the elevation gain and hiking after dark. *Reservations required; 733-5158*

Feb. 28 **7:10 p.m.** **Moonrise Over the Mountains** – *45 minute patio talk*
Relax around a campfire on the visitor center patio as the full moon rises above the cactus forest. Bring a lawn chair and warm clothing. No reservations required. *Wheelchair accessible.*

Special Programs offered at the Rincon Mountain District (Saguaro East) include:

February 4 **7:00 p.m.** **Where the Chicks Hang Out**
Join desert naturalist and author Pinau Merlin in the visitor center auditorium for an in-depth look at the birds that think the Sonoran Desert is a great place to live. *This program is wheelchair accessible.* ♿

February 6 **3:00 p.m.** **Back from the Brink**
What do you mean there were grizzly bears in Arizona? Join a park ranger in the visitor center auditorium to explore the natural history of the grizzly (and 2 other top predators) that once roamed in what is now Saguaro National Park. We will take a look at their past, present and future status in the American Southwest. *This program is wheelchair accessible.* ♿

February 7 & 28 **11:00 a.m.** **People and Places of Saguaro's Past**
Join Park Ranger Arlo Ogden in the Visitor Center auditorium for this photo tour of the park's historic past, focusing on the stories told by its historic structures. *This program is wheelchair accessible.* ♿

February 7 **2:00 p.m.** **Yesterday, Today and...Saguaro?**
Change is coming to the Cactus Forest and we can't do anything about it! But don't worry – change has been happening here for thousands of years. Come explore the life cycles of the saguaro cactus and the changing face of its Sonoran Desert home on this ¼ mile, 90-minute walk. *This program is wheelchair accessible.* ♿

February 11 **7:00 p.m.** **Star Party**
Join park naturalists for an introduction to astronomy and a look at the desert night sky. Telescopes and binoculars will be available. *Advanced reservations are required*, and can be made by calling 733-5153. *This program is wheelchair accessible.* ♿

February 13 **8:00 a.m.** **Buffelgrass Weed Pull (Rincon Mountain District)**
Volunteers will work with park staff to remove a patch of buffelgrass, an invasive non-native plant which threatens the Sonoran Desert. We will meet at the Rincon Mountain Visitors Center and then carpool to a work site near Javelina Picnic Area. Please park in the Administration Parking Lot (first right after entering the park, follow road to the parking lot just south of the visitor center parking area). Wear sturdy hiking shoes, long pants and a hat. Bring plenty of water and gloves (if you have them); tools and gloves will be provided. Following the event we will relax over snacks and beverages. *Advanced reservations are recommended*, so we can get a general participant count. Call 733-5187, or sign up at the visitor center.

February 14 **10:00 a.m.** **1933 to Today**
Join park ranger Arlo Ogden on a historic hike down the Shantz Trail. Learn who Homer Shantz was, as well as how he helped make Saguaro National Park the great attraction it is today. Dress for the weather, wear

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comfortable hiking shoes and bring water. The group will meet at the visitor center, then carpool to a nearby trailhead.

February 12 & 26 7:00 p.m. Night Walk

Join a park naturalist for this easy 2-hour hike to explore and experience the Sonoran Desert at night. Dress for the weather, wear comfortable walking shoes, and bring water and a flashlight. As space is limited, advanced reservations are required, and can be made by calling 733-5153..

February 21 10:00 a.m. Park History 101

A hike down memory lane! Join park ranger Arlo Ogden on a 2-mile, 2-hour hike to discover some of the unique history of Saguaro National Park.

February 20 6:00 p.m. Sunset and Crescent Moon Hike

Watch the sun set (along with the crescent moon) over the Tucson Basin, then follow a ranger into the evening darkness of Saguaro National Park's Rincon Valley for an exploration of the lore of both earth and sky in our Sonoran Desert sanctuary. 3-hour program includes 3-mile moderate hike. Bring flashlight, snack, water, rugged footwear. Advance reservations required and can be made by calling (520) 733-5153. (Directions to trailhead will be provided.)

February 24 7:00 p.m. Desert Wildflowers

Springtime in the desert is a time to enjoy the beauty, color and richness of wildflowers. Join naturalist and author Meg Quinn in the visitor center auditorium to experience a glorious spring and learn how to identify annual and perennial wildflowers. *This program is wheelchair accessible.* ♿

Daily Programs

The park's two districts offer additional daily interpretive programs not listed here. Contact either of our visitor centers for updated schedules, or visit our website online at <http://www.nps.gov/sagu/planyourvisit/things2do.htm>.

Visitor Center Locations/Phone Numbers

Both visitor centers are open daily from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, except Christmas Day.

Red Hills Visitor Center (Saguaro WEST)
2700 North Kinney Road
Tucson, AZ 85743

(520) 733-5158

Rincon Mountain Visitor Center (Saguaro EAST)
3693 South Old Spanish Trail
Tucson, AZ 85730

(520) 733-5153

For more information about Saguaro National Park and some of its partners, Friends of Saguaro National Park, Western National Parks Association, and the Rincon Institute, visit these websites:

www.nps.gov/sagu
www.friendsofsaguaro.org
www.wnpa.org
www.rinconinstitute.org