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## Saguaro National Park News Release

*For Immediate Release*

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### March Programs Offered at Saguaro National Park

Saguaro National Park is offering special programs this spring 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)

**March 5 3:45 p.m. Silhouettes at Sundown 2.5 miles, 3 hr. Hike**

Trek along an arroyo as the setting sun magically silhouettes the Southwest's most famous icon – the giant saguaro. Reservations required; call 733-5158 **This program also offered on March 12 and 19.**

**March 13 3:00 p.m. "Death by Fire" Guest speaker**

NPS Fire Ecologist Perry Grissom helps the park's ecosystems keep their natural fire regimes. In the desert portions, that means keeping fire out, as well as non-native plants that can spread fire in the park. He will discuss buffelgrass's impact on the Sonoran Desert's plants, animals and human residents. Learn the results of recent research into fire behavior in buffelgrass. *Wheelchair accessible.*

**March 25 3:00 p.m. "Wasson Peak Moonlight Hike"**

This 6½-7 hour, 8-mile round-trip hike climbs 1700 feet to the highest point in the Tucson Mountains, arriving in time to enjoy the 360 degree view of the sunset; the descent is by the light of the moon. The hike is at an easy pace but considered somewhat difficult. Reservations required; 733-5158

**March 26 5:00 p.m. "Twilight Glow to Moon Shadows Hike"**

This easy 3½-hour, 2½-mile stroll bridges sunset and darkness, letting hikers experience the desert both in the twilight glow and in moon shadows. Reservations required; 733-5158

**March 27 4:30 p.m. "Sunset Hike"**

A 3½ to 4-hour, 3½-mile round-trip route gains 700 feet (with some switchbacks) before attaining a beautiful ridgeline for sunset; the descent is by the light of the moon. Reservations required; 733-5158

**March 28 5:15 p.m. "Moon Take Night Make Day Hike"**

Hikers on this gentle, relatively flat, 2½-mile, 3-hour hike travel up a desert wash during the transition from day to night, enjoy the sunset atop a hill, then return under the moonlight. Reservations required; 733-5158

**March 30 8:15 p.m. "Moonrise Over the Mountains" Patio Talk**

Relax around a campfire on the visitor center patio as the full moon rises above the cactus forest. The program is approximately 45 minutes long. Bring a lawn chair and warm clothing. No reservations required. *Wheelchair accessible.*

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

**March 5**                      **9:00 a.m.**                      **“Cowboys in the Rincon Valley”**  
Join a park naturalist on this 2-hour, 2 ½-mile hike to explore the history and nature of the Rincon Valley. Meet at the visitor center, then caravan to the Hope Camp Trail. Wear comfortable hiking shoes, a hat and bring water and a trail snack. *This program will also be offered March 12, 19 and 26.*

**March 6**                      **10:00 a.m.**                      **4<sup>th</sup> Annual Fiesta de Saguaro**  
Join Saguaro National Park as we celebrate our Hispanic heritage, history and culture. A full day of activities is planned, including craft demonstrators, Mariachi music and folklorico dancers, special presentations, and children’s arts and crafts. Traditional Mexican food will be available for purchase. Free shuttle service will be offered from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. from the Sahuaro Baptist Church (northeast corner of Houghton Road and Old Spanish Trail). ***Call the visitor center at (520) 733-5153 for more information.***

**March 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. Reservations are required, and can be made by calling 733-5153. *Program is wheelchair accessible.* ♿

**March 12 & 26**                      **7:00 p.m.**                      **“Night Walk”**    *1 mile, 2 hours*  
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, Reservations are required, and can be made by calling 733-5153.

**March 18**                      **7:00 p.m.**                      **“Venomous and poisonous Creatures”**  
Join naturalist Sandy Reith in the visitor center auditorium to learn about the biology and adaptations of some of Arizona’s amazing creatures, including rattlesnakes, scorpions and Gila monsters. *Program is wheelchair accessible.* ♿

**March 20**                      **6:15 p.m.**                      **“Sunset and Crescent Moon Hike”**    *3 miles, 3 hours*  
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. Bring a flashlight, snack, water, rugged footwear. Advance reservations required, and can be made by calling 733-5153. (Directions to trailhead will be provided.)

## **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](http://www.nps.gov/sagu)  
[www.friendsofsaguaro.org](http://www.friendsofsaguaro.org)

[www.wnpa.org](http://www.wnpa.org)  
[www.rinconinstitute.org](http://www.rinconinstitute.org)