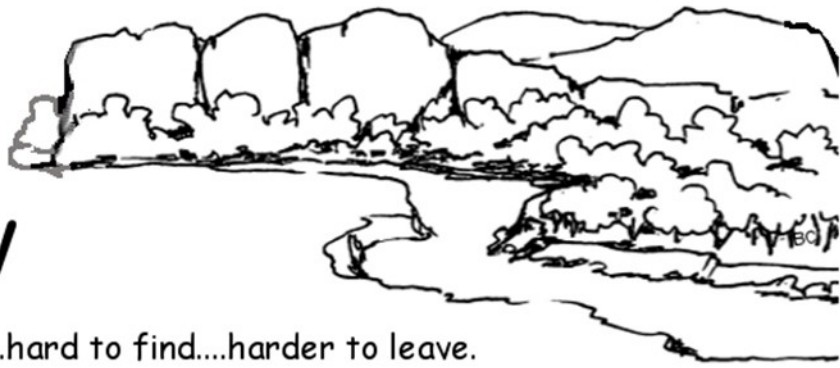


# the Valley View



Cascabel...hard to find....harder to leave.

Issue #16

An Occasional Cascabel, Arizona Newsletter

April 2023

## In this issue

We remember and document the big snows of February 23 and March 2. What a surprise. As the temps rise, it will be hard to remember that we shivered in astonishment. It could have been New England. And throughout the fall and winter, a major project at Sweetwater Center (El Potrero), thinning the choked mesquite bosque to eliminate fire fuels was taking place. And the Community Center's new roof! With the rainfall is a Nature Conservancy graph charting valley well depths from 2005 to present.



(cc by-nc-sa) Tom Talbott, Jr.

Tom Talbott, Jr.

## **THE BIG SNOW....**



Well, we didn't quite need a sled and a dog team that March 2nd snow to get down Cascabel road, but we were astonished to wake up to a complete covering that continued on through much of the day. The road was slippery but passable. The Facebook page (membership optional), San Pedro River Road Report, developed by Leslie Maynard, was helpful as usual with Ross Maynard offering cryptic, funny observations on his way out. Cascabel was reporting nearly 4 inches and J-Six registered 8 inches of snow.





Photo Pat Rudikoff



Photo Janis Bell



Photo Cindy Salo



Woody's daffys Photo Chris Eastoe



Photo Karen McKelvey





Melissa Miller photo credits Gary Yamnitz



Phyl Tharp



Gilbert Urias



Michele Romine's Christmas Card House Benson: 4.5 inches of snow



And then signs of spring begin with the living green ribbon of cottonwoods lining the San Pedro River as the desert begins to wake up.



Photo Neal Rudikoff



Photo Edie Cundiff



Photo Sue Newman

## Opening Up the Bosque at El Potrero, Reducing the Fire Fuels

By Ann Russell

Last fall ('22), Sweetwater Center received a two-year grant for \$26,000 from the Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management to reduce the wildfire threat to El Potrero and neighbors by thinning the overgrown mesquite bosque and thicket behind Pat Corbett's house, a total area of 10.7 acres. Edith Robinson, with Andrew Connelly, Natalie Tellwright, Alex Binford-Walsh and others proceeded with cutting so that trees were over 15 feet apart and all branches were over 8 feet from the ground. Edith also organized weekly work parties of community members, who dragged bunches of slash to be chipped to adjacent pastures, and bigger branches to be burned as firewood to the lane where folks from the community could pick them up and take them home. Support from the community for the project was outstanding.



In the critical month of March, there were 18 different members of the community who volunteered over 100 hours of work in support of the project. As a grand finale, Edith held a two-day chipping party aided by volunteers, producing 14 truckloads of mesquite chips. At the end of March, thinning the mesquite pasture and Pat's yard was complete. There are still two big piles of firewood by the driveway at El Potrero, available to the community. We left the rest of the thinning project for next winter to let birds nest in peace this spring.

Gratitude to Ann Russell for writing the grant and for being part of the wood cutting crew.



**Stihl Life!**

A wood cutting work day. The trimmed up bosque looked so good that someone started calling it Potrero Park.

**Before and After**



Photos Ann Russell , Sue Newman & others



Fearless leader Edith Robinson



Alex Binford-Walsh and Edith moving endless amounts of wood



Ann Russell being coached



A treasure trove of wood available



## Some of the Other Wood Workers



Joe Page collected wood for his chiminea



David Omick and Andrew Connelly flipping logs over the fence for further removal. Andrew worked consistently with Edith on this project. They both came down from Montana after leading outback mule trips into the wilderness. Andrew went on to South America.



Carl Howard cutting up brush and Katie Talbott helping to add to the enormous wood pile.

~.....~.....~.....~.....~.....~



## A kiss good night

I stood beneath the stars tonight,  
and could not recall when last I received them  
as something more than a single breath  
and a kiss good night.

As when I was a child, this time they invoked  
fantasies of flight.

Kai Staats

Photo Stars over Cascabel

Is this what you want in your  
viewshed?



### Help fight SunZia

This massive, ill-conceived electric  
transmission line that many  
Cascabelians have been fighting for  
14 years, got its Arizona permit  
approved in November of last

year. SunZia thought that was the last word in its  
approval process. Not quite, as it turns out.  
Intervenor Peter Else, now represented by a crack  
team of attorneys from Tulley Bailey law firm, has  
taken the Arizona Corporation Commission to court.  
PLEASE help fund this legal effort by going to the  
GoFundMe site.

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/xrb8y-protect-the-san-pedro-river-valley>



Photo Sue Newman

## Community Center Roof Recap

By Barbara Clark

Thirty-odd years ago, Cascabel neighbors installed the roof on our Center. The volunteer crew had backyard experience building homes and outbuildings, and had supplies purchased by a wide variety of fundraising events. They didn't have battery powered drills and they lacked funds and expertise to lay a plywood deck above the insulation or put

in soffits or good valleys between roof angles.

A year ago, we started looking for someone local who would repair leaks in the roof that were causing serious flooding down the fireplace wall. After the fourth refusal to take on the job, and another rainy season, we decided – cautiously and rather fearfully – to take one of the contractor's suggestions and replace the entire roof.

Fortunately, when Anna Lands asked a Benson contractor, who had done good work on her property, if he could recommend any reputable roofing contractors, he said he did roofing and would take a look at the project and give us an estimate. I say fortunately because as it turned out, John Malboeuf and his skilled workmen Aaron and Sam of Hickory Construction did everything they said they would and did it professionally on all fronts. The worksite was spotless. Materials removed (the old insulation and rotted lumber) and destined for the dump were promptly hauled off. Materials removed (the corrugated tin) and destined for repurpose locally were neatly stored. Materials and supplies for installation appeared when needed and more showed up when those were installed.

Craftsmanship was superb. Communications were clear and pleasant and the work went according to the proposed timeline.

We amended the contract after the work had started to include some work that would reduce future maintenance and enhance the longevity of the new roof. The roof overhang was extended

above the clerestory windows, some wood framing was replaced, a 'roof cricket' was installed to divert water from the chimney, and the exposed wooden fascia was



sheathed with metal. A third amendment is in progress: we decided to replace the existing gutters with stronger and better designed new gutters. Erik Revere has been volunteering his experience and helping identify where downspouts should be located and locating a good source for materials that can be delivered to Hickory Construction where they can be fabricated to fit and then be installed. This will add around another \$1,500 in materials and labor, but the installation labor is covered in the original contract.

So how much did this capital improvement and investment in the future cost and how the heck did we raise the funds to do it? Well, like a lot of other rural ops, we did it together thanks to the individual generosity of the neighbors.

We needed to raise \$81,525. Frankly, this felt daunting. But we had to try. We had savings of \$30,000 in CDs that we decided to devote to the project (leaving us around \$7,000 in checking for operating expenses). The remaining \$51,525 came from four fundraising events held at the Center and from individual donations received over a span of about six months. The fundraisers were at a Halloween Party, a Saguaro Juniper potluck, a pie auction, and a 'Salon' event and netted a little over \$2,000.



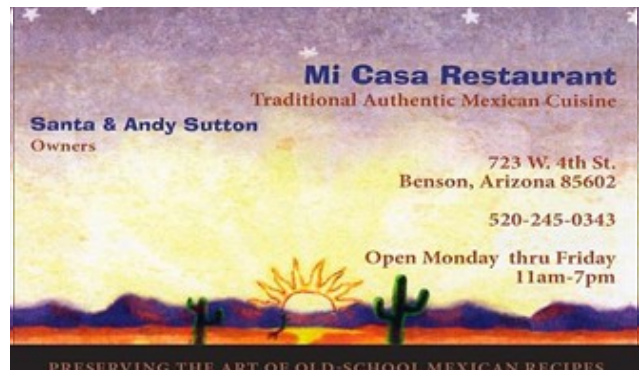
We sent email requests for donations out via the bulletin board. Donations began to come in. We sent project work updates out and let everyone know how the fundraising was progressing. Several neighbors contributed more than once as they learned of the need. One donor gave almost \$10,000, three between \$5,000 and \$6,000, one in the \$3,000 to \$4,000 range, seven gifted in the \$1,000 to \$2,999 reach, ten folks donated between \$500 and \$999, six contributed in the \$200 to \$499 spread, and five gave between \$20 and \$200.

Together, we raised the funds needed to raze the old roof and replace it with a new, improved roof. It became apparent as this project evolved that donations were coming in based not on big bank accounts, but from folks with big hearts.

Each of us did what felt right for ourselves, and by doing so, we all benefitted. And we've invested in what we believe in and contributed to its future. Kinda inspirational; evokes feelings of thanks and calls for celebration. Be proud of what you've done, Cascabel and Friends.

**From Our Librarian Lisa Vogel**

Not long after I became the librarian of the Cascabel Library, the Community Center Board told me, "No more bookcases!" Thus the idea of a rotating library was born. I wasn't sure it would work but now, something like ten years later, I can say with certainty that it has worked great. Not only can Cascabel residents find something to read without driving all the way to Benson, but when we receive book donations from community residents, older books we've had for a while are then taken off our shelves and re-donated to either the Benson Library Bookstore (which raises money for scholarships) or the Federal Prison just outside Tucson (for inmates to read). Thank you to all who have donated and all who use the library.



**Cascabel Community Center**

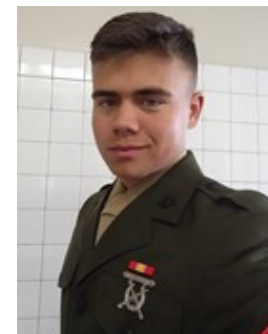
**Board of Directors:**

- |             |                                     |           |               |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|
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| Treas.      | Linda Haynes                        |           | Eddie Cundiff |
| Secretary   | Fred Weiner                         |           | Anna Lands    |
| Valley View | Sue Newman                          | Librarian | Lisa Vogel    |
|             | CCC email list serve Alan Wilkinson |           |               |

Valley View Logo Dave Shreeve and Barbara Clark  
 Graphic support Michael Puttonen Robert McClure

Submission/suggestions/corrections to  
 Sue Newman 5851 Cascabel Rd [snewsy@rnsmtc.com](mailto:snewsy@rnsmtc.com)  
 Cascabel, Az 85602

**Where our Young People are Now**



Ariana finished her US Space Force All-Source Intelligence Analyst training at Goodfellow AFB in San Angelo, Texas and will be going to Wright-Patterson AFB in Ohio.  
 US Marine Luca (Lance Corporal) finished training as an AAV tank operator with two honorary promotions at Camp Pendleton, California, and will be deployed offshore soon.



## The Cascabel 2022 Quilt is coming to an Online Raffle Soon

By Barbara Clark

You may have wondered what happened to last year's quilt. This annual effort to fundraise for the Community Garden and Center has a long history of bringing seamstresses and quilters and just plain menders together to make an object of function and beauty and tradition. Well, the volunteer makers got the quilt ready but the volunteer promoters got sidetracked with other activities and we missed the usual fall and winter effort to sell tickets. Time to get on it!

The Quilt's theme is "I Am". It is 57"X74", double bed topper, and made of washable cotton. It's a tribute to the uniqueness of each of us and how we all complement one another.

Need a gift for a graduation, a wedding, or something new for your home? Maybe you'd like to support the community Garden or the Center. Maybe you just can't resist the lure of a chance to own it. Every square maker was given the same four different pieces of "calico"—material—and instructed to use some of each color (plus adornments) in their squares. What we did with the same materials illustrates and celebrates our diverse community.

"The Lord sends us the pieces; we can cut 'em out and put 'em together pretty much to suit ourselves. There's a heap more in the cuttin' and the sewin' than there is in the caliker." (Excerpt from *Aunt Jane of Kentucky* by Eliza Calvert Hall, quoted in *The Standard Book of Quilt Making and Collecting* by Marguerite Ickis, 1949.)



Thanks to the Makers: Anna Lands for leading the project, Desiree Pursley for doing the quilting and Edie Cundiff for donating the liner. And thanks also to the Square Makers, listed here in order of their position on the quilt from top left: Delight Edgell, Barbara Clark with help from Calla Hoaglund and David Blocker, Jude Martinez Keene; second row Lois McKelvey, Nikki Stanton, Lisa Vogel; third row Pat Corbett, Julieta Gamez, Phyl Tharp; and fourth row Willow Hoaglund, Yvonne Chauvin, and Bonnie Bell.

And thanks to you for purchasing raffle tickets! You must be an Arizona resident to participate. The Garden and the Center share the proceeds equally. And we are all equally grateful for your financial support of our projects. Can't wait to see who wins!



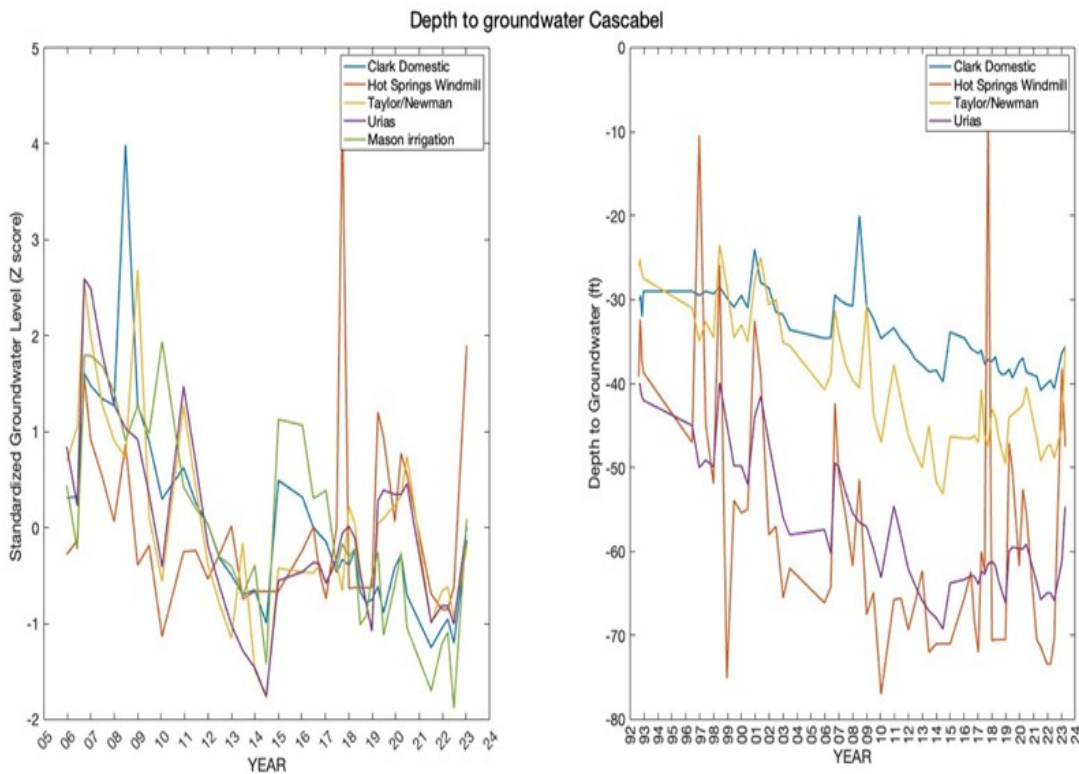
# The Nature Conservancy: 30+ Year of Well Monitoring

By Jessie Pearl, PhD, Freshwater Scientist

TNC has taken well measurements in the Cascabel community since 1992, capturing over 30 years of climate and groundwater variability. Since 2005, there is consistent data from five representative Cascabel wells across various seasons.

In the left panel of the figure, we show well measurements on dates where we have data from the wells at Clark Domestic, Hot Springs Windmill, Mason Irrigation, Taylor/Newman, and Urias. The y-axis of this figure shows standardized groundwater levels (Z-scores), where scores larger than 0 are higher groundwater levels than the 2005-2023 average, and scores lower than 0 are groundwater levels lower than the average. We see a steady decrease across all wells from 2005 to June 2014, then a period of variable yet relatively stable groundwater levels from 2015 to early 2020. The influence of a very dry 2020 and 2021 winter are reflected here, with some of the lowest groundwater levels since 2014 seen in 2022. Encouragingly, we see that the end of 2022 and beginning of 2023 measurements have a positive trend – let's all hope for another wet monsoon!

The right panel of the figure shows actual depth to groundwater for the four longest datasets. Prior to 2005, the Clark, Hot Springs Windmill, Taylor/Newman, and Urias wells typically measured 5-20 ft higher than 2005-2023. The large variability in groundwater levels at Hot Springs Windmill is clearly visible here, with June 2017 having the highest groundwater levels measured in the past 30 years.





Month	Clayworks B. Clark	Narrows Alan Wilkinson
Jan '22	0.56	0.30
Feb	0.04	0.02
March	0.55	0.56
April	0.00	0.00
May	0.00	0.00
June	2.88	0.87
July	3.31	1.81
Aug	5.81	5.09
Sept	2.01	2.83
Oct	1,72	1.27
Nov	0.04	0.00
Dec	1.52	1.39
<b>Total</b>	<b>18.44</b>	<b>14.14</b>
Jan '23	1.11	0.57
Feb	0.89	0.67
March	0.32	0.24
April	0.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.32</b>	<b>1.48</b>



Watershed boundaries hold more significance in the long run than human-devised boundaries  
**LowerSanPedro.org**



Photo Gilbert Urias





The Oasis Sanctuary is the forever home to over 700 parrots. Each and every one of these beautiful creatures has a unique personality, strong spirit, a challenging life story and a powerful will to live - often against all odds.

-Waylon  
Citron Cockatoo  
Joined the flock in 1999

## OUR MISSION IS A LIFE-LONG COMMITMENT

Established in 1997, the internationally recognized Oasis Sanctuary is the most highly regarded life-care facility for parrots in the United States. Nestled in the San Pedro Valley in southeastern Arizona, The Oasis provides permanent care, shelter and rehabilitation for parrots and other captive exotic birds.

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The Oasis survives solely on the donations and generous contributions of the public.

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