



SADDLEBROOKE

HIKING CLUB NEWSLETTER

<http://saddlebrookehikingclub.com>

MAY/JUNE

2020

LETTER TO SADDLEBROOKE HIKING CLUB MEMBERS

Dear Hiking Club Members,

April 1st marks the transition when three of the six Board of Director's positions change.

Thank you to Jerry Fleming for two years of club service, first as Vice-President and this past year as President. Thank you to Frank Earnest for giving us two years, first as Associate Chief Guide and this past year as Chief Guide.

An extended thank you to Darlene Carlson who has served four years as club Secretary! When you next run into these colleagues, please express your personal appreciation for the effort they've put forth on our behalf.

Hand in hand (that is virtually of course, maintaining 6') with saying "great job folks" is welcoming the incoming SBHC BOD members. Tim Butler will be Vice-President this year and transition to President next Spring. Katie Atkins will be club Secretary for the next two years (unless she follows Darlene's model). Michael Hovan will join the BOD as Associate Chief Guide this year before assuming the Chief Guide position next Spring. Please say thank you when you next see them!

Three BOD members are mid-term and continue until next Spring. Thanks to Treasurer Ray Peale for keeping our finances in order and paying our bills for this year and next. Thank you to Ruth Caldwell for assuming the Chief Guide position, which is possibly the most demanding job in the club - organizing our hikes with the guides.

As provided in our bylaws. I assume the Presidency after serving as the current Vice President.

As you are aware, club led hikes are suspended through April 30 at this point. The BOD will continue to monitor state and national recommendations on when it is prudent to resume club activity. In the interim, please stay active and do personal walking or hiking in a safe manner.

I want to personally thank everyone mentioned for their service, plus our guides and the numerous (unnamed here) volunteers that keep our club going. Importantly, thank you to the members that preceded us who left a great foot print for us to follow down the trail.

Please raise your hand to volunteer when the opportunity next presents itself to assist the club.

Regards, Rob Simms

WALT SHIELDS SELECTED AS 2020 SBHC TRAILBLAZER

Submitted by Rob Simms

What is a Saddlebrooke Hiking Club Trailblazer? A member whose efforts in support of the club are defined by the following criteria:

For meritorious service above and beyond simply being a member of the hiking club, for performing duties greater than expected, and for exhibiting leadership that we all admire, we honor the following people.

The 2019-20 SBHC Board of Directors selected Guide Walt Shields as a club Trailblazer.

Walt has constantly worked to advance the club in many roles over the years. He has been Chief Guide, served as the Nominating Committee Chair, actively assisted in the Club's GPS training classes, and been a speaker at our annual "New Hiker Orientation" program. Walt also presents a clinic and leads a practice hike demonstrating the proper use of hiking

poles. He is the coordinator and leader of the SBHC Catalina Hills Road Cleanup events held twice a year. He continues to be one of our most active and popular guides.



Perhaps his crowning achievement is creating a training program for the Club guides which provides them valuable information on first aid and accident/incident handling. As he is fond of explaining, “We are an aging population doing a strenuous activity in a hostile environment!” With his medical background (he is a retired Periodontal Surgeon), he recognized the need for our guides to be better prepared to assist with incidents on the trail during hikes. He has arranged classroom instruction and conducted field exercises simulating common hiking injuries. Walt has devoted countless hours to organizing, presenting, and improving this valuable training to our guides over several years. His energy and dedication are matched by his boundless enthusiasm and his gregarious personality.

CONGRATULATIONS WALT – WELL DESERVED

The award plaque is displayed in the SaddleBrooke One clubhouse on the wall outside Coyote Room North where we hold BOD and Guide meetings.



SADDLEBROOKE HIKING CLUB BOARD AND GUIDE MEETING SCHEDULE
 Submitted by Rob Simms

Traditionally the SBHC BOD and Guide meeting have been held six times a year on the first Wednesday of even months, (if not canceled due to lack of quorum [4] or lack of a business need to meet). The current unprecedented circumstances resulted in the cancelation of the April 1 meeting. At this point we are uncertain when in-person meetings will resume. The BOD’s and Guides are using email for routine communication. I urge club members to contact any of us if you have questions during this stand-down.

That said, the tentative meeting schedule for the remainder of the year is listed below. Please note the starting time for the meetings has been changed. **BOD meetings will begin at 2:00 pm and Guide meetings will begin at 3:30 pm, if they are held.**

The Chief Guide determines the need for this meeting tangential to the BOD meeting. All SBHC BOD and Guide meetings are open to members.

The HOA1 Coyote Room North is reserved for us from 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm, except as noted (October 7, 2020 to February 3, 2021).

June 3, 2020, Wednesday BOD 2:00 pm
HOA1 Coyote Room North

August 5, 2020, Wednesday BOD 2:00 pm
HOA1 Coyote Room North

NOTE: This summer meeting is often canceled due to lack of quorum or lack of business to conduct.

October 7, 2020, Wednesday 2:00 pm
HOA1 ROOM - NOT AVAILABLE
Meeting scheduled in MountainView
Club House - Cactus Room
Room reserved 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm

December 2, 2020, Wednesday 2:00 pm
HOA1 Coyote Room North

February 3, 2021, Wednesday 2:00 pm
Meeting room to be determined.

HOA1 room reservations for 2021 are not accepted until September, 2020.

**SHARING A WONDERFUL
WILDFLOWER SEASON REMOTELY**
Submitted by Tim Butler

One of the things I look forward to most every spring is co-leading one or two wildflower hikes with my good friend and mentor, Elisabeth Wheeler. These hikes have been very popular in the past, and we have had overflow numbers of Hiking Club members signing up for our two scheduled hikes this spring. Mother nature has blessed us with abundant late fall and winter rain, and this season has one of the best blooms I can remember. Unfortunately, the Covid-19

pandemic has kept us from enjoying these beautiful flowers in a group format.

However, many of you have continued to hike the trails in your own small groups to enjoy nature's beauty. I have been quite honored to have many of our members send me emails with pictures of flowers and ask that I help identify them. This is a real treat for me because it is great fun doing the identification, and it also keeps me in touch with you.

Our spectacular flower show is not over yet. In fact, I am seeing later emerging species pop up all the time. So, keep hiking, keep taking pictures, and please feel free to email me pictures of those flowers you do not recognize. I will do my best to get them identified for you.

Thanks, and take care at this difficult time.

Tim Butler - tucsontimmer@gmail.com

FLAGSTAFF HIKING CLUB TRIP
October 13 – 15, 2020
Submitted by Dale Leman



SaddleBrooke Hiking Club is planning the fall multi-day hiking trip to Flagstaff this year. Planned hiking dates are October 13, 14, and 15 (Tuesday – Thursday). Most will want to arrive on, or before Monday, October 12, and depart Friday, October 16.

Details on the trip, including registration requirements, are posted on the SaddleBrooke Hiking Club website under the “Programs & Club Trips” tab.

To participate - you must register, as participation may need to be capped. Hikes are currently being researched, and registrations are still being taken.

PICKETPOST MOUNTAIN

Submitted by Randy Park



That flat top mountain you see along highway US 60 between Florence Junction and Superior is called Picketpost Mountain.

From Wikipedia: "The mountain's unusual name stems from an early military camp established at the base of the mountain by General George Stoneman in 1870. The soldiers nicknamed the mountain "Picket Post" due to its usage as a sentinel point to guard their camp from attacks. This military camp eventually grew into the present-day town of Superior."

The hike was short and steep. About 5.5 miles out and back with over 2000 feet elevation gain - almost all of it in the last 1.5 mile. I wondered why there were so few signups for the hike, but now I know why. Once you have done it, you have little desire to do it again.

SBHC SPRING AND FALL PICNICS

Submitted by Seana Kobak and Missy Rodey

The SBHC spring picnic scheduled for March 27 unfortunately had to be canceled, along with all other hiking events due to COVID-19 guidelines for gatherings. Approximately 100 of you had signed up to attend the annual meeting and al fresco dining at Oracle State Park.

The Picnic Committee was ready for you, including Linda Beloff, Elaine Fagan, Martha Hackworth, Karen Hop, Joyce Murizzi, Harriett Pearson, Jeanine Storrs, Melissa White, and Tamie Williams. All committee members have eagerly signed on to organize the 2020 fall Hiking Club picnic.

So - mark your calendars for **Friday, October 30**, and plan to assemble at Catalina State Park for what will be a joyful celebration of our return to social gathering and celebration of our mutual love of hiking in the beautiful Sonoran Desert!

GARDNER CANYON TO TEMPORAL GULCH BACKPACKING TRIP

Submitted by Seana Kobak

Six adventurous hikers set out on an overnight backpacking trip on February 8 - 9. The hike was organized by Phil McNamee, but it was led by Beth Jones and Seana Kobak (both "guides in training").



Left to Right: Beth Jones, Elisabeth Wheeler, Seana Kobak, Ray Peale, Phil McNamee)
Photo by Linda Eglin

The projected weather for the weekend was ideal for a backpacking trip. No rain, mid 60's during the day, and mid 30's for the evening. There were 15 mph winds projected for the late afternoon on Day 2, and we expected to be finished by 2 pm—Mother Nature had other plans!

The first day was a gentle hike through Gardner Canyon. Beautiful golden hillsides of grass, fun stream crossings, granite cliffs, and lunch by a

beautiful stream. Warm sunshine and delightful conversation made for a very pleasant day.



Ray Peale and Linda Eglin on the trail Picture by Elisabeth Wheeler



Rock formations in Gardner Canyon Photo by Elisabeth Wheeler

Evidence of Mining in the Area:

Signs posted in a couple of spots along the trail gave evidence that this area could have looked very differently if circumstances had been different. This area and the water rights were once claimed by the SRWMCo (Santa Rita Water and Mining Company).

The 435 test holes in 10 gulches in this area indicated that there was gold in the hills, estimated to be worth ~\$1,000,000,000 in 1904! This was to be the largest and richest mining area in all of Arizona. Kentucky

Camp, which is located along Passage 5 of the AZT was built in 1904 as a mining camp for SRWMCo.

A hydraulic sluicing technique was to be employed, at least initially, to mine the gold. This technique uses high pressure water to disintegrate gravel and gulch floors and then washes them to the sluices. Stetson, the engineer and manager for the SRWMCo, built: 5.5 miles of ditches, 2.5 miles of pipeline, 2 tunnels (1400 feet,) and one small damn which is right by the stream where we ate lunch. One plaque along the trail shows how they were able to get the water to flow uphill. Evidence of one of the tunnels is still visible on the trail today.

A test run was conducted in 1904 after the summer rains. The test was successful, water ravaged the banks of the gulch, the sluices separated the gravel from the gold, and the furnace melted the gold into a single bullion thought to be valued between \$3,000 to \$5,000.

But the mine and hydraulic system were never operated again. Stetson fell to his death (or was pushed) out of a window of the Santa Rita Hotel, and McAneny, owner of the SRWMCo essentially went bankrupt.



Mine Tunnel Photo by Linda Eglin

Visit miningfoundationsw.org (Chapter 6) for more information on this story.

Our “home” for the evening:

We arrived at bear spring in late afternoon and set up camp. The campsite had a huge firepit and ample flat

areas where 6 tents could reside. After everyone set up the tent and prepared their bedding, we gathered firewood, filtered water, and suspended rope for hanging our food bags. As the afternoon sunlight began to fade and the temperature began to drop, we warmed ourselves by a blazing fire. After our feast of rehydrated meals, Linda Eglin surprised us by producing a bag of marshmallows. Everyone had several roasted marshmallows—yum! We truly still are kids!



Roasting Marshmallows

Photo by Linda Eglin



Reward from on Top

Picture by Elisabeth Wheeler

Day 2—Packing out

After our morning coffee and oatmeal, everyone packed up quickly and prepared for the 9-mile hike to the car. The first 2.5 miles were a climb (1000 feet), but the grade was reasonable. We were given

spectacular views of Mt. Wrightson and Josephine Saddle along the many switchbacks. At the top, we were rewarded with a stunning view of the valley below and the mountains in the distance. Manzanitas in full bloom lined the trail for the next mile or so.



Manzanitas in Bloom

Picture by Elisabeth Wheeler



View of Mt. Wrightson

Picture by Beth Jones

Spirits were high, but it was apparent that the high winds that were predicted to begin at 2 pm were coming early. It was also apparent that the temperature was dropping. By noon, all of us had reapplied our jackets. To compound matters, we hit a stretch of the trail that was a steep decline down a rocky, gravelly road. There were several slips and falls but none of us had more than a few scratches. By the time we reached the car at 3 pm, the winds were reported to be 23 mph! We were ever so grateful that we had shuttled a car to shorten our hike out!



Beautiful Sunny Day

Photo provided by Phil McNamee

FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEP OF MANY SADDLEBROOKE HIKERS

Submitted by Seana Kobak

Beth Jones and Seana Kobak have been following in the footsteps (literally) of many SB hikers and are embarking on the quest to hike the 800-mile AZT (Arizona Trail). The AZT runs from Mexico to Utah and connects communities, mountains, canyons, deserts, forests, public lands, historic sites, and wilderness areas. Since mid-January, they have completed ~25% of the trail. Each of the passages they completed have had different challenges and

scenery. The only constants in all passages have been the spirit of adventure, admiring nature’s vast beauty, laughter, and friendships. Incredible resources are available to aid ATA (Arizona Trail Association) members. This includes free access to a map app with “blue dot” GPS (a must!), a “day hikers guide” that includes information on access points, and current information on water sources.

Most of the passages have been conducted as day hikes although several have been conducted as multi day backpack trips. There are some sections that are just too long or too difficult to do without backpacking, but most are possible to do as day hikes. The following sections have been completed by Beth and Seana (And a few others on occasion—Linda Eglin, Elisabeth Wheeler, Michael Hovan, Phil McNamee, and Ray Peale).

Passage 3: Canelo Hills

Distance: 16.6 miles

Difficulty: Moderate

Accessibility: good dirt roads

Rating: ****



Rolling grasslands mixed with upper Sonoran Desert defines this passage. Nearby Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve has 275 species of birds.

Passage 4: Temporal Gulch

Distance: 22.3 miles

Difficulty: Strenuous

Accessibility: good dirt roads

Rating: ****



Travels through a former mining region. View of Mt. Wrightson from Gardner Canyon

Passage 5: Santa Rita Mountains

Distance: 13.5 miles

Difficulty: Moderate

Accessibility: good dirt roads

Rating: ****



Accordion-like ridges of the Santa Rita Mountains

Passage 6: Las Colinas

Distance: 13.3 miles

Difficulty: Moderate

Accessibility: good dirt roads

Rating: ****



Muddy paths and roads due to an overnight rain on backpack trip made for a treacherous hike! We also learned to avoid dirt roads after rain!

Passage 7: Las Cienegas

Distance: 13 miles

Difficulty: easy

Accessibility: good dirt road + paved road

Rating: ****



The trail traverses between the Santa Rita and Rincon Mountains. Great mountain views and gentle grade.

Passage 8: Rincon Valley

Distance: 14.8 miles

Difficulty: easy

Accessibility: dirt road + 2+ mile hike to trail

Rating: ****



Beautiful flowers (Desert marigolds and meadow flax) spotted along the trail. Passage 8 also travels thru Colossal Cave Mountain Park

Passage 10: Redington Pass

Distance: 15.7 miles

Difficulty: Moderate

Accessibility: Dirt road to Redington Pass is good but last 2 miles to Italian Trap requires 4x4

Rating: ****



Michael Hovan resting after 1000-foot climb



Linda Eglin hiking through a boulder area on the trail

Passage 14: Black Hills

Distance: 27.4 miles

Difficulty: Moderate

Accessibility: good dirt roads but distance required an overnight backpack

Rating: ****



Beautiful rainbow over our camp after a surprise thunderstorm



The views and wildflowers were stunning on this passage, and it is so close to home!

Passage 15: Tortilla Mountains

Distance: 28.4 miles

Difficulty: Moderate

Accessibility: good dirt roads but distance required an overnight backpack

Rating: ***



Linda Eglin taking a much-needed break on an 18-mile backpack day



Practicing physical distancing on the trail. Distance views of mountains and the old Ripsey Mine near Kearny.

Passage 16: Gila River Canyon

Distance: 25.2 miles

Difficulty: Moderate

Accessibility: combined with passage 17 for a 2-night backpack for good access on paved roads

Rating: ****



Beautiful views of walnut canyon and Gila River Canyons including “the spine” and “the Rincon”



We were surprised to see several Gila monsters & rattlesnakes on the trail

Passage 17: Alamo Canyon

Distance: 11.5 miles

Difficulty: Moderate

Accessibility: combined with passage 16 for a 2 night backpack for good access on paved roads

Rating: *****



Rewarded with a beautiful sunset from our campsite after a challenging 14-mile climb



Great views of Alamo Canyon and Picketpost Mountain. Wildflowers were everywhere!

Passage 25: Whiterock Mesa

Distance: 11.4 miles

Difficulty: Moderate

Accessibility: Dirt road to Doll Baby TH is good but 4.5-mile hike to trail is steep and slippery

Rating: ***



The trail through the Mazatzal Wilderness is an 11 mile steady climb. The trail included a thigh-high river crossing, a trek across Whiterock mesa and then a climb through an area where the rocks looked like skeletons!



Fields of owl clover near Polk Spring

Passage 26: Hardscrabble Mesa

Distance: 12 miles

Difficulty: Moderate

Accessibility: Dirt roads were okay although a short section had water over the road (~20" deep) on FR 428

Rating: ***



Interesting tree along the trail



Beth was able to capture great photos of some of the flowers that we have not seen on any of the prior passages

If you would like information regarding hiking the AZT and/or the trail resources contact:

Seana Kobak (seanabk88@gmail.com)

or

Beth Jones (bethannjones.831@gmail.com).

**UNSTOPPABLE SADDLEBROOKE
HIKERS – SEANNA AND BETH**
Submitted by Elisabeth Wheeler

Seana Kobak and Beth Jones are unstoppable in their quest to complete the 800+ mile Arizona National Scenic Trail. Linda Eglin and I were privileged to join them in backpacking the Alamo Canyon and Gila River Canyon passages, beginning at Picket Post and ending 38 miles southeast at Kearny.



I was eager to hike the Alamo Canyon passage; it had been re-routed since I hiked it in 2006. There was concern that I might not be able to handle the distance and 8500 feet of elevation gain in a timely manner.

I am older and slower than the capable trio of Seana, Beth and Linda. My husband became my “trail angel” in driving me to the Picket Post Trailhead ahead of their arrival.

Drama ensued when Seana, Beth, and Linda arrived to discover the Picket Post Trailhead had been closed. The Tonto NF ranger allowed them to hike 2 miles to the Trailhead to continue the backpack “because they couldn’t abandon an 80-year old hiker already on the trail.”



This put them over 3 hours behind me. I, Elisabeth, became worried when 5 hours passed and they hadn’t caught up to me. I nervously backtracked 1 mile. We met up, with relief! Together we climbed up, up, up to the newly installed rainwater collector tank which is midway to the Gila River water source. It was a lovely place to camp, filter much needed water and enjoy the sunset.



A highlight of the following day was seeing Dale’s Butte, named for the founder of the Arizona Trail. Wildflowers were everywhere as were desert critters — three rattlesnakes, 3 Gila monsters and a spiny lizard.



The Gila River was muddy, challenging Seana’s water filter. We enjoyed a long rest break. We ate an early dinner to minimize the water we needed to carry to our campsite. After a long day on the trail we enjoyed a colorful sunset.



Photos by Elisabeth Wheeler, Linda Eglin, Seana Kobak and Beth Jones



Our last day was cloudy and cool as we followed the Gila River Canyon to Kearny. We enjoyed a final rest break, with legs uplifted, before completing this wondrous backpack!

Future Trips

Destination	Dates	Contact Person
Mogollon Rim	June 8, 9, 10	Randy Park rparktucson@gmail.com
SBHC Trip to Flagstaff	October 12-16, 2020	Dale Leman dale.leman@gmail.com
The Colonial Cities Tour	October 17, 2020	Phil McNamee mcnameephil@gmail.com

Hiking Information



We know it's disappointing to see the May/June newsletter with no hikes listed (pretty sure that's a first). But rest assured, your guides are planning hikes; and those hikes will be sent out in an email blast just as soon as it is deemed safe to resume sanctioned hikes. In the meantime, please continue to get out and enjoy our beautiful surroundings - in small groups with appropriate social distancing.

Ruth Caldwell, Chief Guide
Michael Hovan, Associate Chief Guide