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Cave Creek RAYA Facilities established at CNUW and SCC Toad Hall Becomes Haven for Lowland Leopard Frogs

CNUW's Toad Hall and Greenhouse recently became home to over 100 adult Lowland Leopard Frogs from the Cave Creek area. In partnership with the Arizona Department of Game and Fish, CNUW collected these individuals from the Watt Preserve portion of Cave Creek this past July. These frogs now live in what has been named the Cave Creek **RAYA** Facilities at SCC. The name RAYA comes from the first letters of the two-part scientific name of this species, *Rana yavapaiensis*, the lowland Leopard Frog. The droughts of recent years coupled with the introduction of exotic species to Cave Creek (crayfish, sunfish, etc.) seemed to have almost wiped out leopard frogs in Cave Creek until last year's winter rains apparently allowed a partial recovery of this species in Cave Creek. But soon after a new threat to the frogs raised its ominous head as well. Due to the occurrence of multiple wildfires throughout Arizona, including the large and destructive Cave Creek Complex Fire, large amounts of ash, quite toxic to many species, began to settle in riparian areas including the portions of Cave Creek, posing a threat to the wildlife that lives among and depends upon these riparian habitats for survival. The Lowland Leopard Frog is one such species whose very survival and continued existence could be potentially severely thwarted by the presence of this ash within its habitat. This species, like most amphibian species, is already declining throughout the world due to many factors including water pollution from herbicides, pesticides, fertilizers and heavy metals, the destruction of riparian habitats by ranching/grazing by cattle and sheep, and the over-consumption/overuse and/or redirecting of vital water reservoirs. Due to the looming threat of these ash deposits within these vital habitats, the AZ Department of Game and Fish decided to take action to create a refugium, a haven for many of these individuals of this declining species, in the hope that eventually individuals will be able to survive, reproduce genetically viable offspring, and that successive generations will one-day in the near-future be re-released into the original habitat of the Watt Preserve. CNUW feels much honored as the organization selected to house this refugium.



Meet Your Desert Neighbor: Feature: Woodhouse's Toad

By: Adrianna DeFranco

Walking across campus last week, completely absorbed in my own thoughts, I suddenly heard what sounded like a screaming calf, a “b-a-a-a-a-h!” This noise was so reminiscent of something one can imagine from Silence of the Lambs, that I was convinced I’d somehow unwittingly stumbled into a slaughterhouse. Thankfully, coming to my senses, I realized I was nowhere near a slaughterhouse of any sort, but instead was standing at the edge of the pond in the center of campus. The “screaming” I’d heard was actually emanating from inside the pond--a very squat, and rather imposing toad was making his presence known. Woodhouse’s Toad is a gray-green toad between 2”-5” long with a prominent white stripe running along its from wooded bottomlands to irrigated farmlands and is one of the few amphibians who resides in residential areas as well. When its front and hind legs appear, its gills are replaced by lungs and its tail finally disappears, this toad is considered an adult and only then can this species live without constantly inhabiting water. This species is predominately active in the evening or at night, and usually hibernates during the winter, burrowing itself under soft soil or debris. The woodhouse toad, like most toads, has horizontal pupils, and it also has large glands on its neck called parotid glands which secrete a poison that makes this toad an extremely unsavory meal for would-be predators like coyotes or raccoons. And despite what your grandmother told you when you were young, this toad can NOT give you warts if you touch it! Unlike many of the species in the campus pond, the Woodhouse Toad made its way there of its own volition, and this hardy species, by the way, is the namesake of CNUW’s very own Toad Hall.



Woodhouse's Toad (Bufo woodhousei)

CNUW Director Roy Barnes

Meet the Members of CNUW:

CNUW Director Roy Barnes –

Involved in CNUW since its origin in the late 1990's, SCC Life Science professor, Roy Barnes has worked for CNUW first as the Chairperson of CNUW's advisory board and more recently as CNUW's director. He asked to be pictured in this particular issue of the CNUW newsletter because of his appreciation of the behavior and appearance of amphibians, one of his favorite groups of animals.