



Friends of the Desert

Issue 32

Summer 2006

In an effort to ensure all Coalition supporters receive regular program updates, we're sending this bi-monthly newsletter relaying information about important activities related to the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan (SDCP) and other Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection efforts. Please contact Sean at Sean@sonorandesert.org or at 520-388-9925 with any questions or comments. Please visit the Coalition website to learn more at www.sonorandesert.org.

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• **Feature Article: Death Valley Ultramarathon Run is Fundraiser for Coalition!**

Long time Coalition supporter Bruce Gungle is once again sacrificing body and mind to raise funds for the Coalition. And you can join him!

From July 24-26, Bruce will be competing in “the world’s toughest foot race,” the Badwater 135 Ultramarathon. The 135-mile course begins at Badwater Basin in Death Valley (the lowest and hottest point in the Western Hemisphere at -282 feet), then goes 42 miles across Death Valley in the 120°+ F heat of the day, over two 5,000 ft. mountain passes and then halfway up Mt. Whitney to the Portals where the race ends at 8,400 ft.

Bruce’s goal is to finish the race in less than 40 hours. While competitors have up to 60 hours to officially finish this race, completing the brutal 135 mile course in under 48 hours is necessary to earn the coveted Badwater belt buckle. Bruce accomplished this in 2004 when he crossed the finish line after 42 hours, 48 minutes, and 58 seconds to place 26th.

Bruce is asking that folks who want to support the Coalition and Team Coonhound do so by either making a pledge per mile of the race he completes this July, or by pledging a flat amount.

But the more contributions pledged per mile, the more inspiration Bruce has to continue on, mile after grueling mile, to complete the entire 135 mile race—please see the box below to find out how to pledge! Bruce is also supporting the American Black and Tan Coonhound Rescue <http://www.coonhoundrescue.com/> and all contributions will be split 50/50 between the two organizations. All donations are 100% tax-deductible.

For this Ultramarathon, Team Coonhound will include 6 crew members including Coalition Director Carolyn Campbell. The crew will be charged with feeding, watering and pacing Bruce, as well as monitoring his health and taking the occasional verbal abuse that only someone running/walking 135 miles in the scorching heat is allowed to dish out. Team Coonhound—both crew and runner—is stoked to once again be part of this incredible feat of endurance and perseverance.

You can watch the race as it unfolds on the Badwater webcast which is accessible from the race website: <http://www.badwater.com/>. The webcast will include hundreds of photos, regular updates on the leaders, periodic updates on the rest of the pack, and some general interest stories from the race as it progresses.



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Thanks in advance for your support of Team Coonhound and the Coalition. Bruce's goal now is to raise \$6,000 total; please help Team Coonhound get there by making your pledge today—be the first one on your block to kick in! And be sure to follow the race on the webcast July 24-26. And get your friends involved—pass this on! More info and updates will be posted on the Coalition website at www.sonorandesert.org

BADWATER 135: TEAM COONHOUND

To make a pledge per mile or to receive updates on the Badwater 135 contact Sean@sonorandesert.org with **Badwater** in the subject line or you can contact the Coalition office at (520)388-9925.

You are encouraged to make a pledge now but to wait until the race is completed before sending in your contribution. Bruce will send out an update on the race and the number of miles completed after the race is over. For example, if you were to pledge \$1/mile and Bruce and Team Coonhound complete 90 miles of the 135 mile course, you would contribute \$90.

If you would like to make a secure online donation use the link below and specify that you would like to make a donation on behalf of **Badwater** in the appropriate box at the top of the screen:

<https://secure.groundspring.org/dn/index.php?aid=7576>

You can also send checks directly to the Coalition at 300 E. University Blvd., Suite 120, Tucson, AZ 85705. Please make checks payable to the Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection and include **Badwater** on the check.

All of this information will be included again in the post-race email sent to all who pledged.

(Incidentally, if “Team Coonhound” sounds familiar, it may be because Bruce and fellow Coalition supporter Sergio Avila together with their Team Coonhound bike crew, finished the 508 mile Furnace Creek 508 bicycle race last October, also to support the Coalition. Tales and pictures of this endurance race are archived under “In The Spotlight” on the Coalition website: <http://www.sonorandesert.org/archives/spotlight>.)

• Action Alert: Protect Arizona's Roadless Areas

...they are our last wild treasures. Act now and you can help Governor Napolitano protect these special places for all of us.

Now is the time to tell the Arizona Game and Fish Department that you want 100% of Arizona's roadless national forest lands fully protected. Your participation at public meetings and comment letters will assist Governor Janet Napolitano and the Arizona Game and Fish Department in developing Arizona's petition to the U.S. Department of Agriculture to protect all 1.2 million acres of inventoried roadless areas in six national forests in Arizona. These lands are crucial to wildlife and their habitat, recreational opportunities like hunting, fishing, hiking, and camping, protecting our forest watersheds, and guarding against dangerous wildfires.

A series of open house meetings will be held around the state in July and August to provide the public with more information on roadless areas and the state's petition process.

Written comments will be accepted until Aug. 31st.

E-mail comments to: roadless@azgfd.gov

Mail comments to: **Arizona Game and Fish Department – WMHB**

Attn: Roadless Area Comment

2221 W. Greenway Rd., Phoenix, AZ 85023

Thanks for your generous support. If you ever have any questions or comments feels free to contact Coalition staff at (520)388-9925 or email Sean@sonorandesert.org



Open House Schedule: Mark Your Calendars to Be There!! Attending the open house meetings is perhaps the most important way you can support the Governor in this effort. We need lots of people to turn up and voice their support for protecting roadless lands and their value to you, your family, and your passion for the outdoors. **All open houses across Arizona will be held from 6-9 p.m. beginning July 5th. For a complete list of meeting dates and locations, visit: <http://www.arizonaroadless.org/cgi-bin/display.cgi?page=publicmeetings>**

Thursday, July 6 - Tucson (Coronado National Forest), Arizona Game and Fish Department Tucson regional office, 555 N. Greasewood Road, Tucson.

Visit www.arizonaroadless.org to learn more about roadless areas and how you can help! Tell your friends. Spread the word!

• **Special Thanks to Two Coalition Supporters**

The Coalition's many achievements would not be possible without the support of individuals in this community. During my two and a half years with the Coalition I have had the pleasure to work closely with many of our supporters. I would like to take the time to recognize two supporters who have been invaluable to the Coalition and are one of the reasons I enjoy my job so much.

Briggs and Pat Ackert live on eight acres out near Ironwood Hills in the Tucson Mountains. They are surrounded by an abundance of desert dwellers, including birds, other small critters and the occasional rattler, and they never tire of watching them. Pat and Briggs also enjoy the change of seasons and their walks through the lush Sonoran Desert. They have lived in the desert outside the city for 36 years and are very happy to be exactly where they are.

Briggs arrived in Tucson from a suburb of Detroit in 1942, graduated from Amphitheater High, spent four years in the Navy during the Korean war and got a Bachelor's and Master's degree from the University of Arizona. Pat grew up in a small town in northern New York State, came to Tucson in 1957 to teach in TUSD and got a Master's degree at the University of Arizona. They married in 1960, spent 41/2 years teaching and traveling overseas and built their house in 1970.

Briggs taught world cultural geography at Orange Grove Junior High and Pat taught English to immigrants and later to foreign students at the UA. They both retired in 1985 and taught in Saudi Arabia and Togo. They had previously spent a year in China where Pat taught English in Beijing.

I always enjoy when the both of them come in to volunteer for the Coalition mailings. The conversation is full of friendly banter with the occasional gripe coming from anyone of us sitting around the table, but everyone always manage to steer back to the positive. Briggs and Pat have been active in many different causes throughout the years and continue to this day, with the Coalition and other organizations in the Tucson area.

Over the last two years I have come to know their love for independent and foreign movies, art, traveling and their deep desire to help protect our Sonoran Desert. Their continued activism and support is a boost to the Coalition. Without the active support and volunteerism of Pat and Briggs, the achievements of the

Coalition would not be as fruitful. Thank you Briggs and Pat and thanks to all of our other supporters and volunteers! You are all greatly appreciated. --- Sean Sullivan



- **Tucson Region Voters Approve Wildlife Crossing Funds in \$2 billion road plan**

For the first time in a citizen-led ballot measure, funding for wildlife crossing structures was approved by voters. In Pima County, Arizona, a \$2 billion transportation plan and accompanying ½ cent sales tax includes an unprecedented \$45 million dollars to specifically fund wildlife crossing structures. The plan and tax were overwhelmingly supported by voters on May 16th.

“This is the latest victory of the community-driven Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan, a visionary multi-species habitat conservation and urban growth planning process that began in 1998,” said Carolyn Campbell, Executive Director of the Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection. “In 2004, voters approved \$175 million of Open Space Bonds for habitat protection. The transportation funding will complement the open space acquisitions that are targeted at protecting and restoring wildlife movement between protected areas.”

According to County Administrator Chuck Huckelberry, “Residents of Pima County place great value on wildlife and habitat and have supported the expenditure of significant funds to conserve the unique natural areas surrounding the Tucson urban metropolitan area. Investment in conservation and transportation are not mutually exclusive. With this funding, we can reconnect vast landscapes, improve wildlife movement through the region and make roadways safer for both animals and people.”

The “critical landscape linkages” funding will be overseen by a team of NGO and agency biologists and transportation officials from the region’s various jurisdictions. The team will identify, evaluate and prioritize locations and design appropriate structures. Funding is available for design and construction of wildlife crossing improvements within future and existing roadways and highways, and will include improvements such as expanded culverts or underpasses, overpasses, fencing and signage.

Local conservationists hope that this successful effort sets an example for their counterparts throughout the nation. “Habitat fragmentation is widespread, and solutions should be as well. As we become increasingly aware that roads create significant barriers to wildlife movement, we must also become increasingly creative in providing safe passage for our nation’s critters. When community residents understand the problem and know there are solutions, they become allies in supporting change,” said Matt Skroch, Executive Director of the Tucson-based Sky Island Alliance.

- **Save the Scenic Santa Ritas**

Coalition member group Save the Scenic Santa Ritas once again needs your help to stop a new threat to the Santa Rita Mountains. Augusta Resource Corporation, a Canadian company, has purchased the private lands at Rosemont Ranch and is planning to submit their mining plan of operation in July to the Forest Service for an open pit copper and molybdenum mine. This means that they will need to do an environmental impact statement (NEPA). Here's what you can do to help:

- Contact the Forest Service to be on their mailing list for any mining activities at Rosemont Ranch, especially for Augusta Resource's projects. Beverley Everson, beverson@fs.fed.us, (520) 388-8428
- Check Augusta's website to stay informed of their activities www.augustaresource.com
- Go to their website for more information www.ScenicSantaRitas.org
- Contribute to SSSR. Please send your donation to us at the address below. SSSR is a 501(c)(3) organization, and all contributions are tax deductible.