



# JUNIOR RANGER GUIDEBOOK







## Welcome to the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department Junior Ranger Guidebook!

To earn your Junior Ranger badge, follow the instructions below, then bring your completed guidebook to any Maricopa County regional park.

Complete at least 5 pages with your animal symbol ...



6 & under

**Kangaroo Rat Level: Ages 6 and under**

(ask an adult if you need help)



7-10

**Horned Lizard Level: Ages 7-10**



11+

**Roadrunner Level: Ages 11**

...AND, all ages must do two of the following activities:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Safely pick up at least two pieces of litter in the park | <input type="checkbox"/> Spend at least 10 minutes quietly enjoying the outdoors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attend a Ranger program                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Go for a hike at this park                              |

Trail name: \_\_\_\_\_

Be the best Junior Ranger you could be, by making sure you stay on the trails and follow all park rules while working on your guidebook!



# MY DESERT JOURNAL



11+



7-10



6 & under

Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_

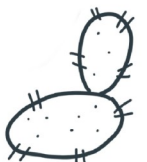
I am visiting (name of park): \_\_\_\_\_

The weather is: \_\_\_\_\_

One question I hope to have answered today:

If you found the answer to your question, write it here:

Draw a picture that describes one of your favorite things from your park visit.



# DESERT ROCK DETECTIVES



11+



7-10

A lot can be learned from closely looking at rocks. They hold clues of what our planet was like long ago. Many rocks in the Sonoran Desert were formed long ago from volcanoes or in ancient oceans. Some of them even have fossils!



Directions: From the trail, find a rock that you can get close to. Look at it closely and complete the activities below to help describe and understand the rock.

## Is the rock:

**Yes**    **No**

More than one color?

☐
☐

Made of many smaller pieces of rock?

☐
☐

Covered in lots of small holes?

☐
☐

Smooth and soft?

☐
☐

Covered in wavy lines?

☐
☐

Rough and bumpy

☐
☐

Made of many shiny crystals?

☐
☐

What is something that you find interesting about this rock?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Draw the rock as detailed as you can.

Do you have any ideas on how the rock may have formed?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



# UNDERSTAND THE LAND



11+



7-10

The Sonoran Desert is home to a great diversity of landscapes. A day of exploring could take you through rugged mountain ranges and across large valleys. The land has been shaped slowly over millions of years by forces like water and wind. In fact, this amazing land is still being shaped today!

**Directions:** Read the definitions of some of the common landforms that you may see in the Sonoran Desert and use them to fill in the blanks on the picture below.

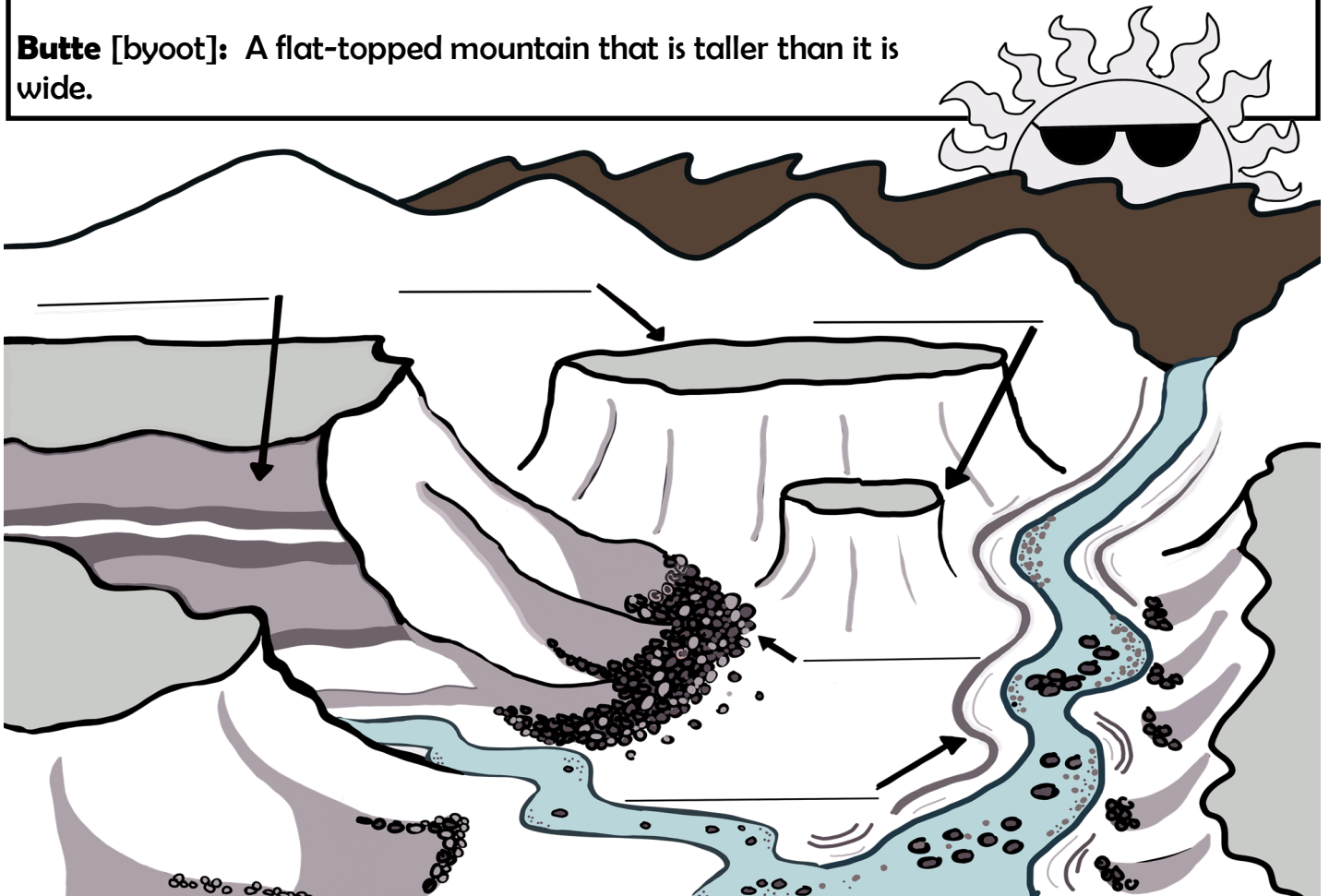
**Mesa** [mey-suh]: A flat-topped mountain with steep sides that is wider than it is tall.

**Canyon**: A deep valley with steep cliffs on both sides, formed by flowing water.

**Bajada** [buh-hah-duh]: A large slope of rocky debris at the base of a mountain that forms from erosion.

**Floodplain**: A flat area of land near a river or stream that is often flooded during heavy rains.

**Butte** [byoot]: A flat-topped mountain that is taller than it is wide.



# LEAVE NO TRACE 7 PRINCIPLES

Thousands of people visit Maricopa County's regional parks every year. With all those visitors, we need your help to keep the parks clean and safe for the visitors and wildlife who use the park! The best way to help protect the park is to Leave No Trace™.



11+



7-10



6 & under

Read the 7 principles below to learn how to Leave No Trace.

**1. Know before you go -**

Be prepared.

**2. Choose the right path -**

Stay on the trail.

**3. Trash your trash -**

If you bring it in,  
you bring it out.

**4. Leave what you find -**

Including rocks, plants, animals  
and historical items.

**5. Be careful with fire -**

Be sure it's OK to build a  
campfire in the park you'll visit.

**6. Respect Wildlife -**

Never approach, feed or follow  
wildlife.

**7. Be kind to other visitors -**

Listen to nature. Avoid making  
loud noises or yelling.

Now that you've read the 7 principles, draw a picture below showing how you can help Leave No Trace while visiting the park.



© 1999 by the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics: [www.LNT.org](http://www.LNT.org)





# PROTECT & PRESERVE

It's important when you explore the park to be safe, respectful, and follow all park rules. The rules are there to help keep you and the park safe!



11+



**7-10**



**6 & under**

In the picture below, seven visitors are breaking the rules. Circle the visitors breaking park rules. What rules are being broken?



# SHARPEN YOUR SENSES

Each Sonoran Desert animal has senses that are perfectly adapted to helping them survive in their habitat. Bald eagles have keen eyesight to spot fish in the water. Coyotes have a great sense of smell for tracking down food. Jackrabbits have great hearing that alerts them of nearby predators.



11+



7-10



6 & under

**Directions: Find a nice place to take a seat outside. Activate your senses to complete the activity below while enjoying the beauty of the Sonoran Desert!**

## Sound:

Close your eyes and listen carefully. What is the first sound that you notice? Is it close or far away? Are you able to hear any wildlife sounds?

---

---

---

---

## Smell:

Relax and take a deep breath in through your nose. Can you smell anything? What do you think it is? Can the smell help give you clues of any people, plants or animals that are near?

---

---

---

---

## Sight:

Slowly look around at your surroundings. Can you see anything moving? Do you notice any wildlife? Are any of the moving things related to the smells or sounds that you noticed?

---

---

---

---



# DESERT BINGO



11+



7-10



6 & under

While you are exploring the park, use your senses to observe the things happening around you. Fill in the boxes with drawings of the discoveries you have made. Try to fill out five boxes in a straight line. For even more fun, try to fill out all of the boxes!

<b>A sound</b>	<b>Something green</b>	<b>Evidence of an animal</b>	<b>A unique saguaro</b>	<b>A living creature</b>
<b>An animal's home</b>	<b>Something brown</b>	<b>Something that moves</b>	<b>Something sharp</b>	<b>Food for an animal</b>
<b>Something you learned today</b>	<b>A smell</b>	<b>FREE</b>	<b>Something colorful</b>	<b>Something that grows</b>
<b>Your favorite plant</b>	<b>Something larger than you</b>	<b>Something small</b>	<b>A nice view</b>	<b>An interesting rock</b>
<b>Something older than you</b>	<b>A mountain</b>	<b>Something you have never seen</b>	<b>A small cactus</b>	<b>A bird</b>



# SAGUARO STRETCH & SKETCH

The saguaro cactus is a home to many of the wild animals that live in the desert.

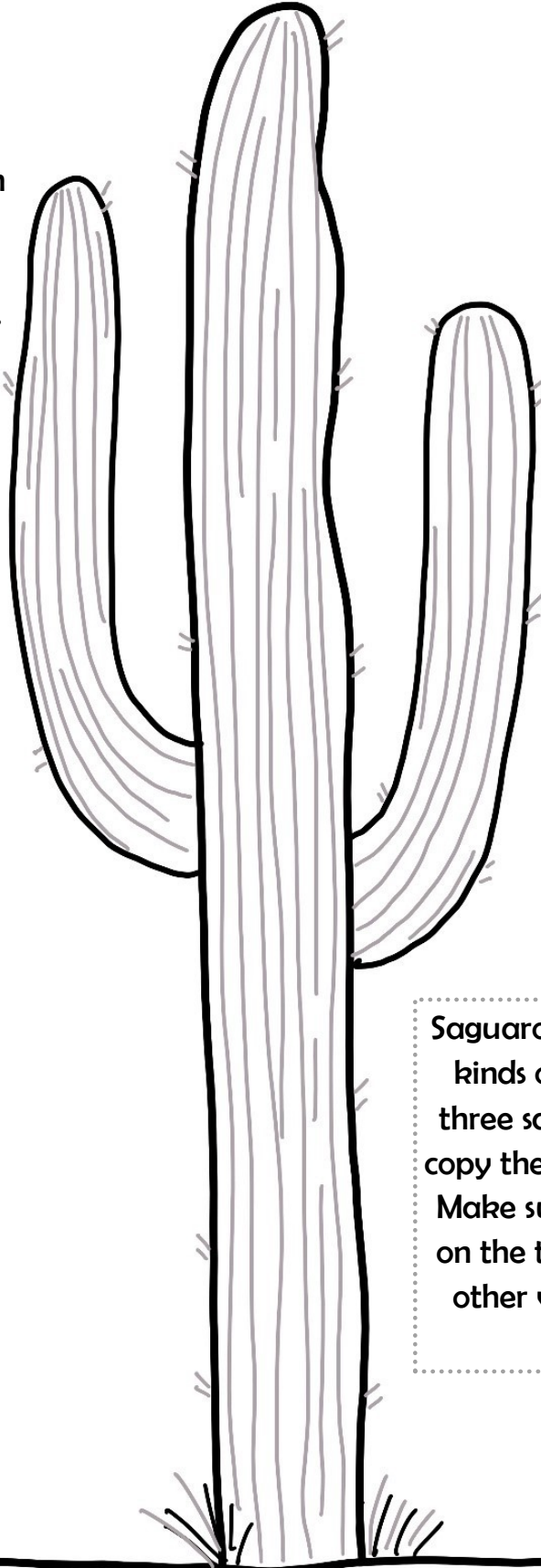
Draw an animal home on or near this saguaro. Who do you think lives there?



7-10



6 & under



Saguaros can be found making all kinds of fun poses! Find at least three saguaros and see if you can copy their pose for a whole minute. Make sure you are in a safe place on the trail and out of the way of other visitors before you stretch like a saguaro!



# TRACKS & TRAITS

Draw a line connecting the animal to their traits and to the clues they left behind.



11+



7-10



Packrat



Gila Woodpecker



Bobcat



Javelina



Western Diamondback Rattlesnake

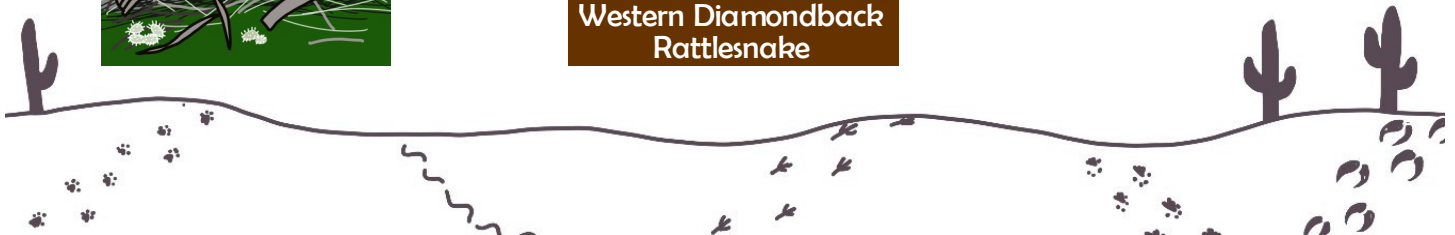
I make holes in trees and cacti that can become homes for other animals after I leave.

Prickly Pear cactus is one of my favorite foods, but don't call me a pig!

I live in a midden, or debris pile, that I build out of plants and other objects I find.

I am an ambush predator and I use venom to help take down my prey.

I am a great hunter and I have retractable claws to keep them extra sharp.



# BE PREPARED



The Sonoran Desert is a beautiful place to spend time exploring the great outdoors. Having the right gear will help to make sure you have a fun and safe time on your trip. In the picture below, there are at least 10 items you should have with you on an outdoor adventure. Circle the items that you think would be helpful to bring along in your backpack during a hike.

## Quick Tips:

- Avoid hiking in the hottest part of the day
- Hike with an adult
- Bring plenty of water, sunscreen, and salty snacks
- Always tell someone where you are going
- Wear the right clothes for the weather
- Stay on the trail





# HOHOKAM HISTORY

For hundreds of years, the Hohokam people mastered survival in this hot, dry desert. They discovered many ways to use desert plants for things like food, shelter, tools, and even clothes. In addition to gathering plants, the Hohokam people also built huge canal systems to water crops. We still use some of their canals, hundreds of years later!



11+



7-10

Below is a list of plants the Hohokam people gathered or grew to survive. Use the key on the left to learn how the Hohokam used each plant. Draw a circle around the plants that you have used at home. Put a checkmark by the desert plants you see outside at the park.

Key	
	Food
	Tools/building materials
	Clothing/fibers
	Medicinal



Agave



Cotton



Saguaro



Prickly Pear



Corn/Maize



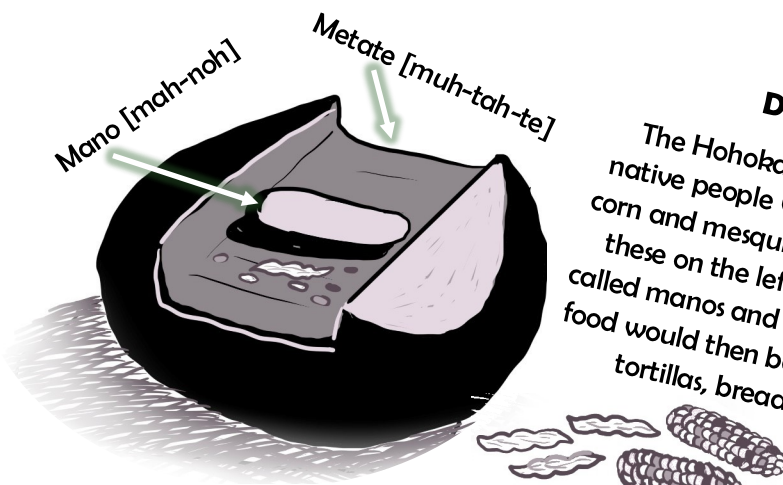
Mesquite Beans



Tepary Beans

## Did you know?

The Hohokam and other prehistoric native people would grind up foods like corn and mesquite beans using stones like these on the left. These stone tools are called manos and metates. The ground up food would then be used as flour to make tortillas, bread and other meals.



# TALK WITH YOUR FLOCK

People experience all kinds of amazing things in Maricopa County's regional parks. Find out what kinds of experiences your friends and family have had here.



11+



7-10

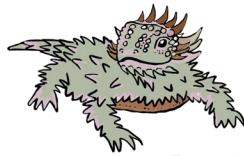


6 & under

Read the questions below with your group then let everyone take turns answering.



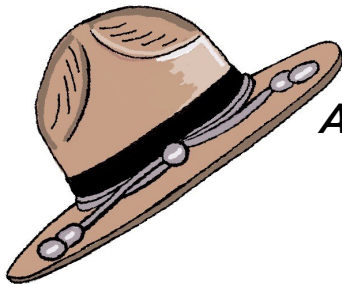
1. When was the first time you visited this park?
2. Name something you saw or did here today that made you excited.
3. Name something you were afraid to do or see at the park today.
4. What did you experience here that you've never experienced before?
5. What is one way we can protect the park so that visitors can keep enjoying it?



## Congratulations!

You have officially completed the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department's Junior Ranger Guidebook. We hope you had fun and learned a lot about the Sonoran Desert!

Bring this completed guidebook to any Maricopa County Park Staff member to say the Junior Ranger pledge and earn your badge!



## Junior Ranger Pledge:

*As a Maricopa County Parks Junior Ranger I,*



*pledge to:*

- *Treat the park and all living things with care and respect*
- *Help keep the park clean and safe for all visitors and wildlife*
- *Keep learning about the Sonoran Desert and our unique wildlife and history*
- *Set a good example for other visitors in the park*



\_\_\_\_\_  
Junior Ranger Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Signature







Thank you for visiting a  
Maricopa County regional park!  
We hope you enjoyed your visit.

There is always something exciting happening in the Maricopa County  
regional parks. Stay updated by visiting  
[www.maricopacountyparks.net](http://www.maricopacountyparks.net)

### **Stay Connected on Social Media**

Follow us:



Facebook @maricopacountyparks



Twitter @MCParks



Youtube @MC Parks



All artwork and photos are property of the Maricopa  
County Parks and Recreation Department