

SCFH looks ahead to fall hiking season

Sonoran Conservancy of Fountain Hills begins its fall hiking season on Oct. 21.

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Sonoran Conservancy of Fountain Hills recently opened up registration for its fall hiking season.

The fall program begins on Oct. 21, according to SCFH's website.

"I think we have a pretty amazing program coming up. We have 36 events or hikes on the agenda," SCFH Co-Chair Pam Cissik said. "We are really making an effort to expand not just the number of programs, but the types of programs, so that more people in the community can participate."

Cheryl Piccirilli, member of the board of directors at SCFH, said she is excited about new participants coming in for the first time this fall and hopefully returning for future hikes.

Besides the exercise or education, socialization is a big appeal of SCFH's hikes.

"For people from the town who want to come and join our hikes for the first time, it's usually a very wonderful experience. We have stewards that are trained to greet people and welcome people, and we make sure that everyone feels included as part of a group," Piccirilli said. "...Hopefully they have a good workout and have gotten to know people, learned something, and usually we have a lot of people that who want to come back."

Returning participants can expect things to be a little different from last time, too.

"New participants or repeating participants will find that we have hikes in the middle of the morning, which is a new thing," Piccirilli said. "Last year we started doing late afternoon hikes, but we hadn't gotten very far with that, so we're starting that again in the fall."

Both said that while you're also making friends, the SCFH is also a great opportunity to learn more about the ecosystem that surrounds Fountain Hills.

"One reason is to learn more about the Sonoran Desert that we live in. We have a lot of interpretive programs," Cissik said. "And secondly, you are meeting other like-minded people and having fun with them. And many of the people who start hiking with us become volunteers, which is wonderful."

Overall, come to SCFH to be more connected to your environment and your community, both say.

“I hope that new participants come out of this feeling more connected to our desert, connected to our town and connected to each other,” Piccirilli said. “So when you see repeat people on hikes, and you start to get to know people, it’s just a great way to make friends and feel like you’re part of the community.”

For more information, visit <https://www.scfh.org/>.

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