



Discovery Road
presents
Desert Song

Arizona story set for television
river, ranch and a cook book

The Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area (SCVNHA) and *Discovery Road* are introducing a new documentary that explores how a big river, ranching, bird watching and Native American traditions are saving history and culture in southern Arizona. The half-hour documentary episode titled “*Desert Song*” travels to a longstanding roadside store where recipes and history reveal an incredible family chronicle.

“Well, I think it's the history of this part of the world of southern Arizona in terms of how people cook and how they eat and is a big part of our cultural heritage. Chili, obviously, is a big portion of how menus and recipes have been created throughout the, you know, thousands of years here in southern Arizona. So, the fact that we have a product that many of locals, and Hispanic people use in their cooking, the idea of adding history to a recipe book just kind of made sense.” Jeanie Neubauer, owner of the Santa Cruz Chili & Spice Co., said in an interview with *Discovery Road*.



SPICE & HISTORY- Jeanie Neubauer, owner of the Santa Cruz Chili & Spice Co., shares favorite recipes and fascinating stories about her family history and the people of southern Arizona. Photo-credit *Discovery Road*.

Neubauer added that the company store, recipes and family history represent southern Arizona and northern Sonora. She says everyday cooking, cowboys and ranching are all part of the history told in the book she wrote and published.

Discovery Road journeyed to the Santa Cruz River Valley to hear one man's perspective on evolving cultures, Spanish Colonial Missions, and a river walk that took a very long time.

"I'm really interested in a history that, took place through all of the time periods in southern Arizona. And the consequences of that history, which was people adapting to this area and to change and culture shifts and how their cultures evolved as a result of that." Dan Judkins, noted historian, says during an interview in the program.



CULTURAL CROSSROADS-Historian and author Dan Judkins offers insight to the Mission San Jose' de Tumacacori monument in Santa Cruz County, Arizona. Judkins is featured in the just released documentary *Desert Song*. Photo-credit *Discovery Road*.

"The Santa Cruz River has historically flowed as a typical desert river which is an intermittent ephemeral river. Parts of it on the surface, other segments go under the sand and flow underground. So, on the surface it looks dry. It may re-emerge further downstream. Because any water in the desert just totally changes the environment. The plant and animal life surrounding it is dramatically different than the typical desert. The Santa Cruz River is an excellent example of that." Judkins states in the documentary.

Not far from Tucson, Arizona, nestled in the Santa Rita Mountains, is a one-of-a-kind place for hikers, campers and visitors from around the world. Madera Canyon is where bird watchers congregate to watch birds, take photographs and experience life in a woodland.



BIRD WATCHERS-Doug and Della Alcorn explain why they travel from their Redding, California home to Madera Canyon in the Santa Rita mountains for some birdwatching. Photo-credit *Discovery Road*.

“Well, it's, it's just a magical place for us. When we come here, we get away from the everyday life, and we come and experience the southwest desert, which is different than, what we live with in Northern California. And like Della said, we have a different suite of birds here, that we get to see.” Doug Alcorn told *Discovery Road*.

The thousands who take time to stopover in Madera Canyon find a rich assortment of birds. After spending time among the ever present songbirds people frequently take precious memories home from the adventure. That was the case for Doug and Della Alcorn who have visited the bird paradise many times. They told *Discovery Road* that seeing birds in Madera Canyon is an unwitting barometer about the state of the world. Armed with binoculars and cameras they capture images and hear sounds in the open air garden atmosphere. Della Alcorn makes greetings cards from her bird photographs. The couple, from California, smiled when they told our television crew that their wedding anniversary was being celebrated among the beautiful birds right there in Madera Canyon.

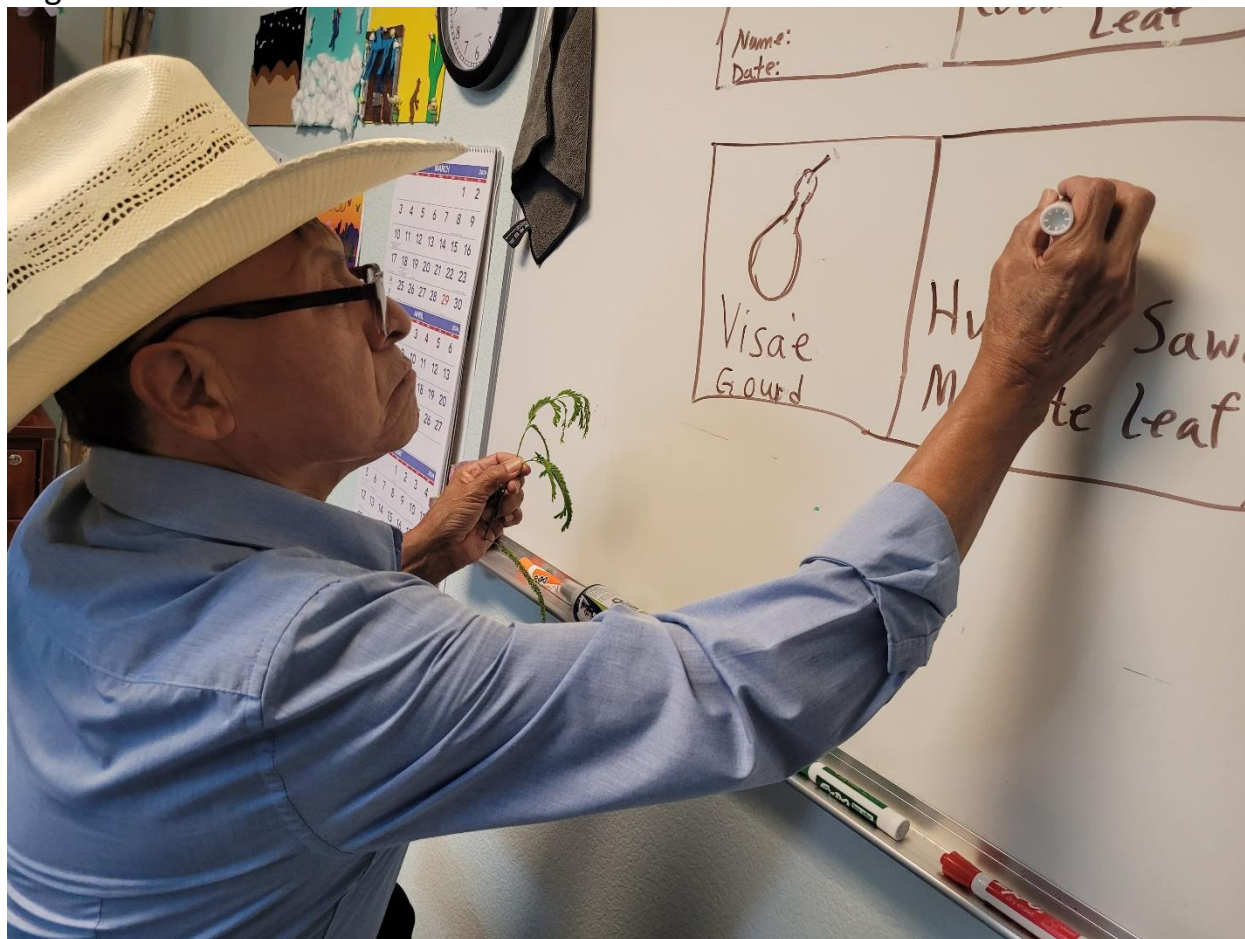


THE STORYTELLER- *Discovery Road* television producer James Nelson prepares for a segment of the *Desert Song* episode at Saguaro National Park in southeastern Arizona. Photo-credit *Discovery Road*.

The release of *Desert Song* again shows how *Discovery Road* continues to partner with national heritage areas. The documentary has produced programming in several regions of the country and highlighted dozens of stories in heritage areas along the way.

“The history is out there. We know that. It is part of our mission statement to have our ongoing series, *Discovery Road*, reach out and find the stories. Heritage areas throughout America welcome *Discovery Road* and appreciate the show bringing their history forward. Our half-hour episodes air on regional television and also on National Educational Telecommunications Association (NETA) stations across the country. A larger audience is discovering this great history. We are very proud of that.” Monte Bona, Executive Director of the Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area proclaimed.

Desert Song introduces viewers to the remarkable story of the Pascua Yaqui people in Arizona. Their story begins along the Rio Yaqui Valley in the northwestern Mexican state of Sonora where they planted and harvested on the desert landscape. They withstood conflicts with other cultures and eventually migrated to southern Arizona.



PASCUA YAUQUI IN ARIZONA-Felipe Molina, historian-educator, and a member of the Pascua Yaqui tribe prepares a language and culture lesson for his students. Photo-credit *Discovery Road*

“So, today’s activity since we finished our manual, we are almost going to review the things that we learned. And we are going to draw some of the things that are in our culture. Make a book called an accordion book. And this project is for your children.” Historian and educator Felipe Molina says to his class during the documentary.

Discovery Road producer James Nelson says the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area offers colorful culture and history on a landscape that is both formidable and beautiful.

“Our visit to the desert was a fascinating ride on the highways and byways of southern Arizona. We found stories of wildlife struggling for existence, people clamoring for survival and an unforgettable, romantic and amazing song of the land in the American Southwest.” Nelson says in the *Desert Song* documentary.

Discovery Road is an award-winning ongoing documentary series broadcast each Saturday on the Utah Education Network (channel 9) at 6pm MST and on several local cable television stations in Utah and the region. Programs are also broadcast on the National Educational Telecommunications Association (NETA) stations around the country. The program partners with the Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area (MPNHA) on history, culture and heritage elements brought forward in the television programs. *Discovery Road* also produces programming for several other national heritage areas in the United States.

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