

**CCA Spring 2022 Meeting
Hermitage Committee Report
April 30, 2022**

Sojourner Reflection

March 2022

I had no concept or frame of reference for 'sojourn in the hermitage at Cascabel,' and so telling my loved ones I would be away and unreachable for a week was both nerve wracking and thrilling.

Arriving with a litany of questions and imagined scenarios, I did not foresee the quiet sense of stillness, rest, and space. It's hard to imagine this type of quiet. The gentle cries of the windmill, the sound of the wind moving through the trees, the birds and scurried movements of mice and lizards served to focus my heart.

I experience rest, quiet, and a recentering. I experienced the stars in a rich and dynamic way observing their path through the night sky.

For this time and space, I am thankful.

Monthly Committee Meeting

The Hermitage Committee meets monthly on the *third Friday. Times variable.* All are welcome to attend. Contact Katie Talbott at kt.talbott@gmail.com for info.

Sabbatical Gatherings

Second Saturday of the month, time depending on the weather and planned activity. May 14th will be the last Sabbatical Gathering for the season. We will take June and July off.

We host a monthly gathering on the land to be in community with each other and the land in attentive stillness, thoughtful conversation, and appreciative exploration. We begin by reading the SJ/CCA land covenant and Bill of Rights together to remind ourselves of our commitment to stewardship. Each month we do something different depending on who attends.

- February – Hosted the Liverman Scholars at the Corbett Center
- March – Goatwalking up Windmill Wash with Moxie, Hiram, Belt, Airplane, Andrew and Edith and guests
- April – Cancelled due to many activities in Cascabel

Committee Membership

The current membership of the hermitage committee includes Susan Tollefson and Katie Talbott (co-chairs), Vera Moritz, Karen McKelvey, and Andrew Volz. Lisa Vogel and Gail Loveland have been participating as guests.

Corbett Center Hermitage

Since February 1, 2022, we have have hosted the following number of sojourners:

- 8 individuals for a total of 48 days
- 1 group of 5 people for a total of 4 days
- 2 last-minute cancellations

We also hosted two 4-hour workshops: *Community Co-Existence: Living Peacefully with the Maligned Rattlesnake* presented by Alexis Williams. 22 people attended and the workshops were very informative and well received.

Caravan Hermitage

Construction of the Caravan Hermitage is very close to completion and we are delighted with the final structure, which will provide many years of service to sojourners in the hermitage program. It will provide a nurturing environment for inner contemplation and also encourages connection with the surrounding land through its small but open design. The structure itself will need very little maintenance, which makes it easy for current and future committee members to manage.

Construction of the Caravan cost more than estimated. Supply chain issues greatly increased material prices in the last year, but due to Erik's forethought to purchase some materials last spring, we will only be about \$1800 dollars over budget on materials, which seems like a small miracle. This includes some extra costs associated with doubling our water storage capacity from the initial design. As this was an experimental design, with many unknowns, labor costs have also exceeded our initial estimate. Our labor cost is \$8200 more than estimated, including the estimate of the cost of the small amount of work left to complete. We want to note that all the work on the caravan was done by local folks, so all money spent on labor has gone back into our community, including supporting some of the next generation of local builders. We also want to note that everyone involved donated labor and materials that added up to at least \$3400.

The Hermitage Committee will be working to develop a plan for how to address the extra cost. We have received donations to date of \$1490 specifically for the caravan, and we would like to use our refunded Hermitage Committee stipend from the past year and seven months (a total of \$2850) toward Caravan costs. This would reduce our current estimated total additional budget need to \$5660.

The initial cost estimate did not include furnishings, placement of the caravan on site, or the compost toilet, so we will still have additional expenses before the Caravan is operational. We will make use of volunteer labor as much as possible for these final pieces.

Fundraiser for a new vehicle

Our new vehicle fundraiser was very successful, and we have adequate funds now to purchase a sturdy used 4-wheel drive truck. However, good quality used trucks are in high demand these days, so we are being patient and waiting for the right one to come along. We thank all who have supported us in this effort.

Straw Bale Legacy Site

We continue to work on creating a legacy site for walking pilgrims at the Straw Bale Hermitage. We have postponing the commemoration event until the fall, probably early November, to combine it with the opening of the Caravan to sojourners.

We want to note to the community that the Straw Bale Hermitage is a great hiking destination for a day hike to honor the past and experience the amazing present of our desert land.

Collaboration with Saguaro-Juniper Transition Planning

The hermitage committee is continuing to participate in Saguaro-Juniper transition planning and fully supports Saguaro-Juniper's holding of the grazing leases that surround the hermitage land. These grazing leases are an integral part of the wildland desert experience that the hermitage offers to sojourners.