

Tirion Featured Speaker at FOSC Annual Meeting

By Bob Brandt

Friends of Sonoita Creek (FOSC) members and guests gathered in Cady Hall on April 15 to review the organization's activities over the past year and to hear Kate Tirion, owner of Deep Dirt Farm and its affiliated institute, describe her journey from childhood in Wales to her present life as a highly-respected practitioner and teacher of permaculture.

Current president, Anne Townsend, welcomed the attendees, related how the group got started some thirteen years ago and presented a brief oral version of her written annual report.

The organization had a very busy year in 2016-17, highlighted by its spearheading of a survey of the condition of fencing bordering Sonoita Creek State Natural Area and adjacent state lands. FOSC hopes the survey will lead to state funding to repair, replace or add fencing to the area to keep cattle from trespassing on, and degrading, the sensitive

landscape, which is home to several threatened or endangered species.

Other notable achievements mentioned by Townsend were continued assessment of segments of Sonoita Creek using Dr. Peter Stacey's Rapid Stream Riparian Assessment protocol, public presentations by Dr. Laura Norman and Dr. Gary Hix, a walk to historic Camp Crittenden and Fort Buchanan led by Dr. Mark Stromberg, and participation in numerous community groups interested in protecting the creek's watershed, including the town's Flood and Flow Committee and the emerging Borderlands Restoration Leadership Institute.

As the featured speaker, Tirion led the audience through a powerful audio-visual presentation in which she described the unique nature of the borderlands region and the techniques she uses on the farm to restore and protect this precious environment. She followed her presentation with a tour of her farm, where members of the group could observe first-hand the practical application of the techniques they had seen in her slides.

Elections for the Board of FOSC were held at the meeting. All current board members and officers were re-elected. New board member Joe Watkins was elected, as well.

Cloud Forest Fundraiser Features Flamenco Artist

A fundraiser for the preservation of Mt. Bomboli, a private ecological preserve in the Ecuadorean cloud forest, will be held May 6 at the home of Cecilia San Miguel, 335 McKeown Ave, Patagonia.

San Miguel has recently returned from her homeland, Ecuador, after traveling around the country for two months searching for land on which to build a healing center. She was confronted with the overwhelming realization of a country devastated by deforestation, soil erosion, and chemical contamination of land and rivers. This violence against nature was positioned in blatant contrast with the majestic scenery of the Andean mountain range and its snow-capped volcanoes.

A week prior to her return to the U.S., she met Osvaldo and Marianita Haro, a couple who has devoted 37 years of their lives protecting what remains of Mt. Bomboli. "Their life's work is a true gift to humanity and the planet," San Miguel says.

This private ecological preserve includes a primary cloud forest, sixteen waterfalls of crystal waters, and is the natural habitat of 400 varieties of orchids amidst the bio-diverse ecosystem. It is situated only one and a half hours from Quito, the crowded capital city of Ecuador, yet Mt. Bomboli remains a pristine mysterious and mystical world, often shrouded in misty fog.

"I spent two days breathing 'living peace' in this sacred place planting orchids with Osvaldo, she said. "What a privilege it was to be in the presence of such a superb human being - a master teacher, conservationist, biologist, ecologist, medicine man."

San Miguel will be serving tapas and entertainment will be provided by renowned flamenco guitarist Robert Longley. Doors will open at 6p.m, and the show will begin at 7:30p.m. Admission is \$30. For reservations, call 520-604-0604.



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