

HISTORY OF THE SABINO CANYON VOLUNTEER BICYCLE PATROL

The Sabino Canyon Bicycle Patrol has been active in Sabino Canyon since April 12, 1992. It was created by the Greater Arizona Bicycle Association (GABA). The purpose is to assist the Santa Catalina Ranger District with promoting safety awareness and user enjoyment of the Sabino Canyon Recreation Area. Since its formation in April 1992, the Sabino Canyon Volunteer Bicycle Patrol has volunteered a total of more than 12,000 hours. Assuming a conservative average speed of 8 Miles per Hour. This amounts to more than 96,000 miles of cycling!

GABA sponsored the Patrol as part of a compromise in 1992 when the prior Forest Service management wanted to close Sabino Canyon to all cycling. As part of the compromise GABA established creation of a volunteer bicycle patrol with the cooperation of the Forest Service. Also, cycling was limited to five (5) days per week.

The patrol members provide their own bicycles and buy their Forest Service uniforms. The Forest Service has provided several two way radios for use by the patrol. The patrol provides its own training in coordination with Forest Service staff.

The Patrol provides an uniformed, recognizable presence to conduct educational contacts for cyclists stressing safety and caution when cycling in a multi user environment. Additionally, the patrol members provide support to the District in dealing with emergency situations.

Hikers and runners, as well as cyclists, now look to the patrol for assurance as to safety and assistance when injured. Solo female runners have also expressed increased confidence in their safety when running in the canyon. First time canyon visitors frequently seek trail and environmental information from patrol members. Another important benefit enjoyed by the public is the ability to cycle in a traffic free environment in an idyllic location. Children are able safely to practice their bicycling skills and senior citizens have a place where they can exercise on their bicycles free from the worries of traffic.

There are regulations covering cycling in Sabino Canyon. They include a 15 mph speed limit and a requirement that cyclists yield to pedestrians at bridge crossings. And, of course, no cycling on Wednesdays and Saturdays and on other days, no cycling between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM, to avoid conflict with the Tram. Groups of cyclists should spread out rather than riding in a pack.