



# Never Lose Your Keys Again

Only \$25



- Business
- East Valley
- Education
- Maricopa County
- Neighbors
- News
- Opinions
- Galleries
- Police/Fire
- Sports

Home Photo/Video Galleries MCC at Red Mountain celebrates completion of final phase of cienega

- Subscribe to RSS
- Follow on Twitter
- Join us on Facebook
- Sign-up for Newsletter

## MCC at Red Mountain celebrates completion of final phase of cienega

Nov 23rd, 2015 · by Richard H. Dyer · 0 Comments

Ten Lowland Leopard frogs were released to a pond at the outdoor-laboratory cienega at Mesa Community College at Red Mountain on Nov. 18.

It was almost nine as one escaped early from its container. But Dr. Andrew Holycross, who teaches introductory biology at the college, 7110 E. McKellips Road, went to the ground and crawled and caught it, placing it gingerly into its new home.

(An exclusive video of college officials and children releasing the frogs – and of Dr. Holycross scrambling for one – follows.)

Lowland Leopard frogs released into MCC's cienega



advertisement

zulily

your new favorite top

shop

### This Week's Newspaper

Mesa INDEPENDENT

Wednesday, Nov. 18, 2015 Vol. 87, No. 8 mesa-independent.com

Now Online

- Expanded coverage
- New online newspaper
- Sign up for daily or weekly e-mailed news updates

**We want your photos**

The independent eye: Brian & Andrea highlight the wildlife and scenic beauty of the community.

**10 military veterans picked for Dream Flights**

They flew in open-cockpit, 2-seat biplane at Falcon Field Airport in Mesa

**Double Sharp**

Assistant-coach assistants Natasha Martin and Maria Ramirez perform "Three Days, Nine 1/2" at the Mesa Arts Center.

**From left are Lynn Samson, the social media coordinator and crew chief, and her husband, Mike, the pilot. She pilots and pilots it the event at 100:1mesaindependent.com/thisweekspaper.**

Hit I'm Conrad, Mesa's Only Locally Owned Funeral Home and Cemetery. Call 480.832.2850 Today!

**MOUNTAIN VIEW FUNERAL HOME & CEMETERY**

advertisement

zulily

your new favorite top

shop



Darrell Woolf, second from left, a Mesa Community College lab tech and exhibit curator, reacts with Sam Cauthen, 5, and Elena

Cauthen, 6, as a Lowland Leopard frog is released in a pond at the outdoor-laboratory cienega at Mesa Community College at Red Mountain, 7110 E. McKellips Road. At left is Maricopa Community Colleges board member Jean McGrath. (Photo by Richard H. Dyer, Mesa Independent)

Helping release the frogs were Elena Cauthen, 6, and Sam Cauthen, 5, their mother, Megan Cauthen, an adjunct instructor, said.

"I liked it because I never saw a frog for real life and it bounced," Elena said.

"I let it out. When it was sideways, like a rectangle, it jumped out," Sam said of the container with the frog.

MCC board member Jean McGrath releases frog into cienega



Patrick J. Burkhart, Mesa Community College at Red Mountain provost (kneeling, fourth from left) releases a Lowland Leopard frog in a pond at the outdoor-laboratory cienega at the college, 7110 E. McKellips Road. (Photo by Richard H. Dyer, Mesa Independent)

The frog releases were part of a celebration of the completion of the final phase of the cienega at Mesa Community College at Red Mountain. The cienega of primarily native plant and animal species was constructed in 2010 and is used for some life-sciences classes. It has a biofiltered recirculating system of primarily reclaimed water.

"We're here to kind of acknowledge the final touches on this incredibly unique resource and it is a special day," Patrick J. Burkhart, Mesa Community College at Red Mountain provost, said at the celebration.

The fourth and final phase of the cienega was the installation of educational signage. The signs were funded through a \$54,736 Heritage Grant from Arizona Game and Fish Department to educate and alert visitors of the sensitive nature of the cienega and provide information on the importance and natural history of desert wetlands and the species that live within this unique habitat, according to a press release.

"These signs represent not only the completion of a six-year journey to providing our students and public with a top-notch exhibit and reserve, but also the commitment of the Red Mountain team to MCC's mission," Dr. Holycross said in a press release.



One of the new signs. (Photo by Richard H. Dyer, Mesa Independent)

Jim Bolek, senior designer at JRC Design in Phoenix, said at the celebration that an illustrator, Zack Zdinak, did the artwork and JRC Design did the layouts on steel posts. "They gave us the information and then we wrote the stories that went with it," he said.

Signs explain what a cienega is – Spanish for "marsh" or "swamp"; and what wildlife may be seen there, from tortoises to endangered pupfish and longfin dace fish.

"This attracts native wildlife. You can come out here some mornings and find Blue Herons eating endangered pupfish here in our cienega. And it's OK because they don't all get eaten. We see roadrunners in here, lizards – native wildlife comes in here and it uses this area as well," Dr. Holycross said at the celebration. "This is a classroom. You are in a Red Mountain classroom right now. We have biology classes that come out here."



The first phase of the cienega project was the installation of a wetland surrounded by native vegetation in the campus' central courtyard. It was completed in April 2010 with the introduction of longfin dace fish to the pond. Phase two, completed in 2012, involved the installation of a gated 3-foot barrier fence to protect cienega wildlife. Tortoises were introduced in October of the same year. Phase three involved the introduction of populations of endangered wildlife in cooperation with Arizona Game and Fish Department; the United States Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service; and the Phoenix Zoo, according to the release.

Endangered desert pupfish were introduced in November 2014 and are thriving, according to the release. (See a story and video from the Mesa Independent newspaper at <http://mesaindependent.com/news/endangered-pupfish-find-new-home-in-mcc-refuge-pond/>.)

Managing Editor Richard Dyer can be contacted at 480-982-7799, via e-mail [rdyer@newszap.com](mailto:rdyer@newszap.com) or at [twitter.com/rhdyer](https://twitter.com/rhdyer).

**Tags:** Featured

## Related Posts



October students of the month honored at Mesa Public Schools meeting

11/23/2015 · 0 Comments



**Mesa City Council to vote on 11 liquor licenses tonight**

11/23/2015 · 0 Comments



**ADEQ reports minimal air quality concerns this week**

11/23/2015 · 0 Comments



You are encouraged to leave relevant comments but engaging in personal attacks, threats, online bullying or commercial spam will not be allowed. All comments should remain within the bounds of fair play and civility. (You can disagree with others courteously, without being disagreeable.) Feel free to express yourself but keep an open mind toward finding value in what others say. To report abuse or spam, click the X in the upper right corner of the comment box.

**0 Comments**

Sort by **Newest**



Add a comment...

Facebook Comments Plugin