



“OFF TO A ROUSING START!”

By Lowell Perry

NOVEMBER 2018 NEWSLETTER



Welcome to the inaugural Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area (YCNHA) newsletter. My name is Lowell Perry, Executive Director. I am excited to introduce this new communications vehicle to you, and hope that you will become a regular reader of it, and share it with friends, colleagues, and family. This is a way for the organization to keep you abreast of the many positive things we are engaged in, how it impacts the area, and how you can get involved through the investment of time, talent, and/or treasure. Your support of this organization helps us to restore, preserve, maintain, and promote Yuma's history. It is our hope that valuable community assets such as the Yuma Territorial Prison State Historic Park, Colorado River State Historic Parks, the East & West Wetlands, Pivot Point, Riverside, and Gateway parks will continue to grow and thrive for many generations to come.

I will be authoring an Executive Director blog each issue. My November message is meant to introduce myself, the newsletter, and to give you a hint at what is to come in the future. Sometimes the theme may be based on what is going on in the world, and how it might relate to our work in the Heritage Area.

The first order of business has been to “lift up the hood of the car” and assess the situation. Throughout my professional career, I have followed a process that involves in depth due diligence to learn an organization's strengths and weaknesses, prior to infusing my own flavor and vision. This “fact finding” mission over the first six months of my tenure as the executive director has thus far been smooth. The board has given me the latitude to spend time doing what I have always enjoyed most about my work in the nonprofit sector - cultivating and leveraging relationships. In this case, it has meant interfacing with many current YCNHA stakeholders, as well as reaching out to forge new partnerships. I have tapped into my Yale business education with an emphasis in organizational behavior, to assess where we are today, and what we aspire to be in the future. In essence, what will our priorities be over the next weeks, months and years? In addition to stewarding and building relationships during this initial time period, I am evaluating the team to determine the optimal structure of the organization in the future, and what skill sets and capacity we will need to win. A report will be created for the board that outlines an organizational vision/mission statement for what I think the future holds for this organization, highlights of my first six months as executive director, and include what I see as priorities, lessons learned, early accomplishments, etc. As the title of this first blog suggests, I believe we have gotten off to a great start, and I look forward to sharing some of my findings with you.

“If you are working on something exciting that you really care about, you don't have to be pushed. The vision pulls you.” - Steve Jobs

Cheers,

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What is the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area?

National Heritage Areas are places where historic, cultural and natural resources combine to form cohesive, nationally important landscapes. The story of water and its impact on the people and land is the key to understanding the history of Yuma. Sitting at the narrows of the Lower Colorado River, Yuma was known as “The Gateway to the Great Southwest” and is the oldest city established on the Colorado River. The Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area encompasses seven square miles along the Lower Colorado River in Yuma, Arizona and Winterhaven, California. It includes the Yuma Crossing National Historic Landmark, the Yuma Territorial Prison and Colorado River State Historic Parks, Fort Yuma, and over 3 miles of contiguous riverfront parks, trails, and 350 acres of restored wetlands.

Colorado River State Historic Park

The CRSHP has partnered with the Southwest Technical Education District of Yuma (STEDY) to develop a self-guided tour app for the park. The STEDY students are building the app from the ground up, gaining real-world development skills that can be used for career advancement, while also filling a need for park visitors!

Back in Time Pie and Tea Shoppe

The Back in Time Pie and Tea Shoppe at the Colorado River State Historic Park opened for the winter season on Saturday, November 3! Miss Eva serves the best homemade pie in Arizona, offering a wide variety of flavors. Formal tea service is also available by reservation. Contact Eva at 928-323-2034 today.

Yuma Territorial Prison

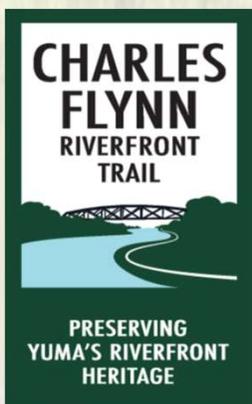
Yuma Territorial Prison was visited by the Travel Channel to film an exclusive program on the infamous prisoner, Pearl Heart. Territorial Prison Historian- Tina Clark, brought the history of Yuma Territorial Prison’s most well known prisoner to life!! Pearl’s story is that in the summer of 1899, she and Joe Boot held up a stagecoach that ran between Globe and Florence. The first publicity this 28 year old, morphine addicted woman would receive, was an interview published in the October, 1899 issue of cosmopolitan Magazine. Her crime was also written up in the New York newspapers. Her actual crime pales in comparison to the thousands words written about her. Writers have been fascinated by Pearl Hart and each has added a bit to the account of her exploits. Over 25 East Coast Reports made their way to Yuma to interview her. The Travel Channel brought several actors to act out scenes and even a beautiful local actress to play Pearl. She was locked into the single historic Woman’s cell. She was surrounded by Prison guards, a warden and other prisoners all in vintage prison uniforms. The program is to be featured on the Travel Channel sometime in 2019.

Yuma Wetlands

The Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area, City of Yuma and over 500 Gowan employees from 11 different countries including the U.S., planted 740 trees alongside the Colorado River at the new Gowan Grove next to Playa Linda Beach in the West Wetlands today. Thank you for everyone's collaboration and partnerships on making this event happen.



YCNHA was thrilled to learn that the Yellow-billed cuckoo, an endangered species, is making a comeback due to the YCNHA's efforts to restore its natural habitat along the Lower Colorado River. In a recent bird survey, researchers came across a nest of fledging young cuckoos during a sweep of the revamped Yuma East Wetlands. The cuckoo is now feeling at home in the Yuma East Wetlands, along with other endangered bird species including the Yuma Clapper Rail and Least Bittern, as well as the Yuma hispid cotton rat.



Riverfront Trail Dedication

November 9th, 2018 the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area unveiled the newest East Wetlands Trail. Charles Flynn, the past Director of the Heritage Area dedicated 20 years to Yuma and preserving its heritage and history. We are very grateful for his hard work and dedication making the Riverfront a wonderful place for all to enjoy.



Important Dates

12/9 – 1st Annual Christmas on the Colorado
12/14 Hispanic Advisory Committee Meeting
1/12-13 Gathering of the Gun Fighters YTP

12/14 – HA Board Meeting
1/11 – Full Board Meeting
1/26-27 Civil War Days CRSHP

2/8 – Board Meeting

Community Outreach and Events

City of Yuma Water Department hosted their annual Project WET Water Festival at the Colorado River State Historic Park. Approximately 600 local fourth grade students attended the festival, and our park manager led one of the festival stations! Students learned about the water cycle, water conservation, watershed management, and groundwater.



The Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area had the opportunity to be a vendor at the Yuma Youth Town Hall event at Arizona Western College. The team was able to share information about the Colorado River State Historic Park, Yuma Territorial Prison State Historic Park and Yuma East and West Wetlands. The students had very good questions and also have great futures ahead of them. It was great to be a part of this event!



The Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area had the pleasure of touring the Yuma Youth Leadership Students through the East Wetlands. Board member Mr. Brian Golding led the tour accompanied by Vianey Avila who oversees the East Wetlands. The students learned the importance of the endangered species and migratory birds that use the wetlands as their home, the importance of water conservation and how low the Colorado River is now compared to what it used to be in the early 1900s.

