

# HOME+LIFE

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**Above:** Christina Thorness writes up a price list with her daughter Ava while getting her Little Thorn Goods table ready at the Fourth Avenue Flea, 311 E. Seventh St., on June 23.

**Left:** A customer gets a closer look at one of the eco-friendly printed pieces on display for Quinn Print 3D at the Fourth Avenue Flea.

**Below:** Tina Newton hangs up her merchandise for her Safety Babes Keychains at the Fourth Avenue Flea. Some 40 vendors, bakers and crafters had booths both inside and outside for the evening at Coalition Space.

KELLY PRESNELL PHOTOS, ARIZONA DAILY STAR

## A space for makers

Find workshops, markets and more at this new center

GLORIA KNOTT  
Arizona Daily Star

When vendor applications for the biannual Made In Tucson market went up last spring, hundreds upon hundreds of makers raced to apply.

"It's amazing. We couldn't believe it," said Shannon Riggs, co-owner of Pop Cycle and the community outreach coordinator for the Historic Fourth Avenue Coalition, which organizes Made In Tucson.

"We've had Pop Cycle for 15 years and we know about the people we have in the store and our circle of people, but we were blown away by how many people were applying for Made In Tucson. And it's all really quality work. We're jurying and looking at the stuff and we're like, 'That's in Tucson? No, that's not Tucson, they're trying to sneak in!' but no, the address is right there."

Made In Tucson started as a

way to support local artists, yes, but also as a way to support Fourth Avenue — a way for the historic street to remain (and become even more) colorful and creative. Vendor fees from Made In Tucson, which takes place adjacent to Fourth Avenue along Seventh Street, go back into the coalition for revitalization projects like murals and now, a maker space to house workshops, markets and other events.

When Made In Tucson debuted five years ago, organizers didn't think it would turn into anything more than a local craft festival. After years of using an empty building to house Made In Tucson materials, the coalition decided to officially lease the space at 311 E. Seventh St., using mostly money made from past markets.

For now, it's being dubbed the Coalition Space.

"We really just love the building, and we love it in its current form just as an empty building," Riggs says. "The owner, Kimberlee Turk, has been so generous to let us use it and keep our stuff there."

"Finally, we were like, we can't let someone else have (this space)," she says.

The space is already in full swing. In May, the coalition housed an art swap where community members were able to trade craft supplies with other makers. Last weekend, there was a gardening-themed swap for plant lovers.

"We're coming up with themed swaps every month, so it's a free event. No one makes money and no one has to spend money," Riggs says. "It's just a cool way for people to take advantage of the space and hang out."

Beyond the swaps, the Coalition Space most recently held its first flea, a night market featuring 40 vendors: bakers, potters, photographers and other makers. It's a concept the coalition hopes to host monthly, taking a break in fall and winter for the holidays and Made In Tucson (which featured nearly 300 vendors last spring).

Mobile art workshop Sunny Studio met with coalition organizers at an open house in May, and is now using the Seventh Street space to host summer art classes. "Summer art classes for kids was one of the things on our mind and it was very fortuitous that she was at the open house,"

Riggs says.

Come July 9, photographer Julius Schlosburg will teach a skill-share class surrounding the fundamentals of photography. The class is priced on a sliding scale, and Schlosburg will get to keep all of the money.

"We want to do more of that, on a sliding scale, where the money goes to the person doing the workshop," Riggs says.

On July 29, makers Within Skin and The Serene Essentials are hosting an event focusing on wellness with yoga, a sound bath and vegan food.

And you may have visited the mercados organized by local group Las Mujeres Verdes — maybe you've picked up a candle or a vegan tamale while you're there. In August, the group is moving its bimonthly markets to the Coalition Space.

Coalition members have even been in talks with The Loft Cinema to host an outdoor movie in future months, and some high schoolers have asked about hosting game nights in the space.

"Really, we want it to be a community center and place where people can do workshops and do

classes and have game nights. Any kind of ideas the community can come up with, we're willing to work with them," Riggs says.

"I went to the U of A from '88-'92 when Fourth Avenue had Piney Hollow and it was funky. Not that (Fourth Avenue) doesn't have a funky vibe anymore," Riggs says, mentioning the vibrant buildings that house Hippy Gypsy and Tucson Thrift Shop. "But things have changed and I think Fourth Avenue needs to be a hub for the community."

When she walks down arts districts like Roosevelt Row in Phoenix or the RiNo District in Denver, she thinks about Fourth Avenue.

"Fourth Avenue needs to be like this — when you drive by and you're like, everything is so rad," she says. "There's no reason it can't be. As business owners, and just people who have been frequenting there — for me, since I was 18 years old — it's something we want to make sure we can make as great as it can be and imagine it to be."

Follow the Historic Fourth Avenue Coalition on Instagram to keep up with future events at [instagram.com/4thavecoalition](http://instagram.com/4thavecoalition).



DAVID CHOJNACKY

The Arizona Trail was very washed out above Romero Pass.

CINDY COFFER CHOJNACKY  
Special to the Arizona Daily Star

Soaring behind Tucson to the north is the crest of the Santa Catalina Mountains — a rugged set of stair steps climbing northeast from Pusch Peak to Mount Lemmon.

A trail system follows or contours that crest from the top of Pima Canyon all the way to Summerhaven and Mount Lemmon. Segments have different names — Pima Canyon, Finger Rock, Ventana, Cathedral Rock, Mount Lemmon — but some hikers call it "the crest trail."

This backcountry trail system within Pusch Ridge wilderness is the steepest, roughest, most remote and least-visited part of the Catalinas. It's also hardest to fix

up and maintain.

Forest Service staff often mention the challenges of trail work on the crest. It's more than 5 miles one way up any of the canyon trails (Pima, Finger Rock, Ventana, Esperero, Romero) to the crest. There's no water to support a trail crew (the closest seasonal water is Pima Spring and sometimes pools in Pima Canyon).

So how bad are the trails? In early May, a reconnaissance trip across the Catalinas yielded a pleasant surprise.

Trails were passable all the way to West Fork Sabino Creek where a northeast route joined the well-marked and cleared Arizona Trail. The hike out — on a trail initially proposed for abandonment — was also reasonable.

Experienced backpackers attracted by the Catalina skyline will find both solitude and improved trails for their trek. But wait until fall after a good monsoon or spring after a good snowpack when temperatures cool and pools return to Pima and West Fork Sabino creeks and drainages in Wilderness of Rocks. A summer trek would be unsafe with the heat and lack of water.

Here's the report. The first three mellow miles of trail up Pima Canyon were well-maintained by Friends of Pima Canyon. The big surprise occurred on the steep climb above.

Back in 2016, before the Big-horn Fire, this trail, which mostly

# Catalina

From E1

contours up north side of canyon, was only inches wide and scary where exposed. After the 2020 fire, Pima trail conditions were reported to be even worse.

Now a real trail had emerged — clambering up rocks in sections but a normal trail width one could hike with backpacks. Above Pima Spring the trail was steep but doable. Upper Pima to Kimball Peak was a nice contour trail with beautiful views. Other than a nasty slide down the far side of Kimball, the trail was good to the Finger Rock junction and another half mile beyond.

The worst section was the descent and contour to a junction with Ventana Trail — flagged and brushed but a thin fluctuating trail unpleasant for backpacking. The well-used trail on up to the Window was wicked steep but wide and well-marked. After steep drop to a saddle and on to a junction with Esperero Trail (coming up from Sabino Canyon), the Cathedral Trail from Esperero to a ridge (and route to Cathedral Rock) with switchbacks into West Fork Sabino Creek was good.

## ‘Trail building on hard mode’

Much of the new trail work was done by Tucson-based Outslope Trails Solutions. Funded through the National Forest Foundation (which has raised funds specifically for restoration work for the 2020 Bighorn Fire in the Catalinas), the Outslope crew rebuilt the tread in Upper Pima.

“The design is not perfect,” said Eric Ruljancich, Outslope owner. “There are some nasty sections. Our goal was to go out and get it open so they average user could go up there and not have to call search and rescue.” Retread work stopped when it got too hot but Ruljancich flagged and brushed the rough section to Ventana junction. Ventana Trail is heavily used by day-hikers and was cleared by the Forest Service.

“My ulterior motive is that if I flag it, people will walk the grass in where it should be,” Ruljancich said. “That section to Ventana is the absolute worst.”

The good news is, Outslope Solutions will finish that section in the fall. Ruljancich also has a proposal to reroute what he calls the drop off “ditch” on east side of Kimball Peak with a couple more switchbacks. Earlier this year, his crew reworked the section from Esperero to West Fork Sabino called Cathedral Trail. “Southern Arizona is trail building on hard mode,” said Ruljancich, who lives in Tucson and works through-



DAVID CHOJNACKY PHOTOS

Good trail work was found on upper Pima Canyon Trail.



Brushy trail was encountered soon after the Finger Rock junction.

out the Southwest. In the Catalinas, the combination of two fires in past 20 years, loss of vegetation, rain events and a soil type that easily goes to “rocky shale ball bearings, these things have compounded to make areas which are really bad.”

The recon hike hit another such area after meeting the Arizona National Scenic Trail (AZT) at West Fork Sabino. The AZT wilderness route in the Catalinas is mellow from Molino Canyon along Sabino Creek, and gently contours above West Fork to Romero Pass (with one big switchback).

The bad part was up from Romero: a mile section of the Mount Lemmon Trail that switchbacks steeply with washed out steep rock up to three feet high — which is no fun to crawl over with a backpack. The barren area was burned in both the Bighorn and Aspen (2003) fires.

Arizona Trail Association (ATA) officials are “well aware of the problem section,” said Zach MacDonald, trail director. “What I proposed maybe five years ago was a series of reroutes. But a zig zag around would not be easy; there is a reason the trail is where it is. It’s all rock and cliffs.”

ATA’s main concern is that neither the wilderness route with the tough Mount Lemmon section nor the wilderness bypass used by

mountain bikes on the east side of Catalinas from Bug Spring to Butterfly Trail is safe for equestrian users. ATA supports the Forest

Service’s proposed multi-use Vista Trail west of the Catalina Highway as a preferred Arizona Trail route for equestrian and moderate cyclists. (Check out the major trail expansion plan for the Santa Catalinas at [tucne.ws/lnq6](https://tucne.ws/lnq6)).

Improving the Mount Lemmon wilderness route for hikers is still proposed but just “a concept on a topo map,” MacDonald said. He cited the usual problems for fielding a trail crew: remote and far from water. “Building switchbacks is slow and expensive.”

## Back on the trails

Once the Arizona Trail nears the first ridge on Mount Lemmon in ponderosa pine, the trail is reasonable most of the way to Summerhaven with a few burned areas and washouts from the two fires. This particular route followed popular day hike areas: Wilderness of Rocks and Mint Springs trails.

After resupply and overnight stop in Summerhaven, the “backcountry recon” was non-wilderness on road to Marshall Gulch trailhead, the poorly signed Sunset Trail, “social (hiker-made) trail” along Bear Wallow and brief section on the Catalina Highway. (The Catalina Trail Plan proposes to improve Sunset and adopt/improve the “unauthorized” Bear Wallow route).

The recon hike reentered wilderness and descended to East Fork Sabino Creek on Box Camp Trail. The Forest Service had proposed dropping this trail from maintenance but agreed to keep it based on public feedback. The trail was good through lightly burned ponderosa.

“Box Camp,” 2 miles down, apparently got its

name from bear boxes nailed to trees from outfitters who used to camp here. The area had heavily burned pines and lush new post-fire fern growth but still offered a nice campsite with a view of Tucson below. The quarter-mile trail to Box Spring was cloaked in Mexican locust and nearly impassable.

Box Camp was likely used by Indians to access the high country, said Coronado National Forest recreation staff officer Adam Milnor. Rancher/outfitter use was described in a Desert Leaf article ([tucne.ws/lnq7](https://tucne.ws/lnq7)).

The well-designed trail followed the ridge most of its 4,000-foot descent, crossing Ash Springs drainage (with large pools in May) then descending to East Fork in more than 20 switchbacks.

The final section along part of the Arizona Trail (East Fork Sabino) and Bear Canyon was a popular thru-or day-hiking route and good except for washout with giant boulders where the trail crossed upper Bear Creek. Horse tracks and manure on the trail above begged the question of how the horses managed.

No hikers were encountered until dropping down to popular Seven Falls on a Saturday, where at least 100 day hikers were met on the way out. This experience dovetails with Forest Service’s findings that the main use of the Catalinas is day hiking. Other than Arizona Trail thru-hikers, few backpack on backcountry trails in Pusch Ridge wilderness.

Other newly-improved wilderness trails include Upper Romero Canyon and Palisades trails. Esperero Trail from Sabino Canyon was brushed by volunteers and Forest Service seasonals.

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