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TOP STORY

## Tumamoc Hill to be opened during the day for walkers starting Sept. 5

By Mikayla Mace Arizona Daily Star **Aug 28, 2017** Updated Sep 13, 2017



Laura and Armando Cornidez enjoy the sunrise from the top of Tumamoc Hill. A new cellphone app, in English and Spanish, will offer information about many aspects of the site.

Mamta Popat / Arizona Daily Star 2014

### MORE INFORMATION



Tumamoc Hill, a favorite walking spot for Tucsonans, will expand the hours it is open to the public starting Sept. 5.



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The new hours will be from 4 a.m. to 10 p.m. every day, giving walkers 18 hours each day to enjoy the scenic 1½-mile path. The change came as an effort to allow the community to enjoy the hike up the hill while also preserving the site's scientific, natural and cultural integrity.

The west-side site will also include signs displaying the new hours of access and wire cables along the path and top of the hill where Ben Wilder, interim director of Tumamoc Hill, said the most damage to sensitive areas is being done. The cable fencing will be to prevent public access to areas beyond the walking path.

“With the increase of numbers in recent years, we’ve seen a very alarming degradation of the top of the hill,” Wilder said.

Tumamoc is an 860-acre ecological reserve and U.S. National Historic Landmark owned and operated by the University of Arizona in partnership with Pima County.

Before, the hill was closed to the public between 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. weekdays. This made it difficult for UA police to enforce rules, and for damage to be done at night.

“UAPD was ticketing grandparents walking with their grandchildren in the evening around 5 p.m.,” Wilder said. “Now, we’re kind of flipping that and trying to accommodate walking preferences if you want to go at sunrise, the middle of the day or evening.”

Over the years, Tumamoc has seen a dramatic

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increase in foot traffic.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, no more than about 100 people would regularly walk the path, Wilder said. Today, that number is about 1,500 a day.

“Tumamoc has seen over 4,000 years of human use (if you include settlement along the Santa Cruz) and has been a cultural gathering place for the valley of Tucson,” Wilder said. “This (current) migration of people is just the latest chapter in this story that’s been going for thousands of years.”

Tumamoc is a beautiful gathering place with a deep cultural history, Wilder said, and he sees it as an opportunity to let people see research in action. “But this is an ecological reserve, not a park.”

There are no pets, bicycles or smoking allowed on Tumamoc.

## NEW PHONE APP TO ENHANCE EXPERIENCE

Walkers on Tumamoc will also have a new way to enjoy their strolls — a soon-to-be-released phone app that is similar to the one that supplements the drive up Mount Lemmon.

The app, for both Android and iOS devices, will feature six sections that are meant to narrate the hike up the hill.

The first section is an introduction and overview, followed by information on the desert laboratory site and history of the buildings. The desert lab buildings

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were built more than 100 years ago, and today, the glass in Wilder's office is wavy with age.

Then the app walks listeners through the landscape, ecology and seasons of the desert.

At the top of the hill, the app delves into the archaeology of the site, including the history of the people who made the same climb thousands of years ago, and stories of the Tohono O'odham, descendants of the people who used to live on the hill.

There will also be 16 YouTube videos of additional content for those seeking a more thorough picture of the site.

The tour will be narrated on the app by Alberto Burquez, a researcher at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, in Spanish, and David Yetman, a research social scientist at the University of Arizona Southwest Center, in English.

“The bilingual aspect of the community that uses the hill has been overlooked, so in terms of my tenure here, it's one of the most important things to support,” Wilder said.

The music accompanying the app is by Calexico and Gabriel Naim Amor.

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