

# Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society (TCSS)

## Cactus Rescue Crew Program

### Policies and Procedures

#### WHAT IS THE CACTUS RESCUE PROGRAM?

The purpose of this program is to save and relocate native cacti and other succulents that would otherwise be destroyed. This Program has been in operation since 1999.

- All salvage operations strictly follow Arizona Department of Agriculture (ADA) Native Plant Protection Laws. All State and Local laws are followed as well as any company or land owner (the entity allowing the cactus salvage operation) rules and regulations.
- TCSS is dedicated to having safe and productive cactus rescues.
- The crew is an all-volunteer group of TCSS Members.
- Crew training for new members is done “on the job” by experienced crew members (they wear blue safety vests).
- TCSS designates a Cactus Rescue Crew Coordinator(s) who oversees the program. Donna Ellis currently volunteers to lead this program.
- The rescue program coordinator (Donna Ellis) designates a Field Operations Supervisor responsible for organizing the member training, plant transport & monitoring safe practices of the volunteers in the field. Steve Watts is the current volunteer in this position.
- Trained Cactus Rescue Crew Leaders (wearing blue vests) work under the field coordinator’s direction and are selected to conduct small group training sessions and assist with the monitoring of safety protocols. The “Blue Vest” crew leaders also help members stay within the designated rescue boundaries.

#### WHAT ARE CACTUS RESCUE POLICIES?

- **We stay out of the way** – We make sure cactus rescue activities do not interfere with or cause any construction or project delays. Member vehicles cannot block or interfere with any local roadway traffic.
- **Current Members ONLY** - All people at a TCSS cactus rescue **must be TCSS Members** except for Company representatives or designated contractors/coordinators to help facilitate the work effort. This is to ensure that our insurance covers all workers and they adhere to our rules and directions.
  - You must sign in at the rescue to indicate that you understand this requirement.
  - No children under 16 years of age may come onto the rescue site.
  - No pets and no firearms
- **We comply with AZ state law** - TCSS is responsible for all plants that leave the site.
  - Site supervisors inspect all plants to verify only species allowed to be salvaged were removed and properly tagged per ADA requirements.
    - Land owners often mark plants “*Do Not Dig*” with colored flagging, verbal instructions, or other methods. You must observe the limitations.

- TCSS sometimes asks you not to dig some plants reserved for training, or other specific reasons. You must observe the limitations.
  - You will be reminded if there are endangered species (like Pima Pineapple – aka *Coryphantha scheeri* var. *robustispina*)
  - You will be given a transport slip after payment to legally move your plants from the rescue site.
- **Observe rescue site boundaries** – It is the member’s responsibility to look at available maps and understand the rescue site boundaries. Digging outside the permitted boundaries constitutes trespass and plant poaching on someone’s private property. This can jeopardize the entire rescue program. It will also jeopardize your participation in the rescue program. Site crew leaders (blue vests) will monitor boundaries and help volunteers stay inside the lines.
  - **Reimburse TCSS for ADA Plant Tag Fees when plants are taken home**
    - \$1 for any cactus less than 8 inches.
    - \$1 for box of 15 mammillaria heads, or 15 cholla or prickly pear cuttings.
    - \$6 for queens, barrels & hedgehogs larger than 8 inches.
    - \$8 for any saguaro over 8 inches
  - **No Trespass** - DO NOT enter the rescue site outside the scheduled date and time. Unauthorized trespass could endanger the TCSS rescue program.

## **CAUSE FOR IMMEDIATE & PERMANENT DISMISSAL FROM RESCUE CREW**

- Removing any plants from areas outside the dig boundaries.
- Failure to properly tag plants protected by Arizona state law.
- Failure to report and pay the tag fee for plants that you take home.
- Participating in a rescue when you are not a currently paid-up member.
- Entering the property at any time other than the posted date and time of the official rescue.
- Removing any plants that TCSS is not authorized to salvage.
- Willful disregard of instructions by the landowner or property manager.

## **TOOLS AND WORK PRACTICES**

Work practices vary somewhat from site to site. The guidelines below apply unless otherwise directed by the site supervisor.

- Crew members are required to have had training specific to each plant that they wish to rescue. Plant specific training is offered in rescue classes or on site at each rescue.
- All saguaros over 2 feet must be wrapped in carpet
- Saguaros over 6 ft tall are required to be supported by a ladder or backing board to protect the plant from cracking during transport.
- Saguaros over two ft tall must be rescued by a team that has had training in rescuing plants of similar size.

- 2 to 4 ft – team of at least two
- 4 to 6 ft – team of at least three
- 6 to 7 ft – team of at least four
- 7 ft + - team of at least five and a blue vest field supervisor must be present
- Ocotillos to be donated to the club must be tightly tied to prevent cane breakage.
- Hedgehogs over 1 ft in diameter must be tied to prevent splitting.
- All barrels, hedgehogs & saguaros must be properly south side marked with white out as instructed by site supervisors.
- Tools supplied by the crew member (rescuers should be self-sufficient as appropriate to each specific rescue)
  - Heavy gloves (welding gloves) – We have gloves for sale if you need them
  - Shovel – we recommend composite or steel handles
  - Hand spade – for removing soil close to roots
  - Pruning saw
  - Cholla comb
  - Carpet for wrapping saguaros (dile – we bring carpet for wrapping TCSS plants)
  - Wheelbarrow, hand truck, sled, sling, bucket or other carry device
  - Cardboard flats or boxes for protecting the plants AND the inside of your vehicle
- Tools available for loan from TCSS – DO NOT TAKE THEM HOME
  - Orange safety vest – required to be worn while on the rescue site
  - White out – for marking plants south side (transplant orientation)
  - Slings – club slings are orange – personal slings are blue
  - Sleds – good for collecting small plants
  - Makita power shovels – available to teams rescuing saguaros, ocotillos or yucca

## SAFETY

Safety is the highest priority and constantly emphasized during the rescue.

- A central tagging and loading location are designated where all supplies are kept, including a first aid kit.
- Hazards: All crew are instructed about any hazards that may exist on the site (rattle snakes, open trenches, power lines, steep banks of washes, hill slopes etc.)
- Cell phones are utilized for both work communications and emergencies. All crew are given the Rescue Site Supervisor cell number.
- Vehicles - Crew shall not ride in truck beds or trailers and shall use seat belts when the vehicle is in motion. Wheel chocks shall be used when vehicles are parked if requested by Company.
- Hard Hats – Mining companies require hard hats, safety vests and vehicle wheel chocks to be used. TCSS has hard hats and wheel chocks to loan when they are required. Crew members must supply their own safety glasses and boots (not steel toed) if needed.
- Each crew member determines their own work abilities/limits. **Each crew member is required to have their own water and snacks.**

- The work period is four hours or less to minimize fatigue and possible heat exposure. Each crew member may check out at the tagging station and leave whenever they like.
- Most rescues start within an hour after sunrise to avoid as much sun/heat exposure as possible.

## **IN CASE OF EMERGENCIES AND ACCIDENTS**

### **Minor Injuries:**

- All minor injuries are to be reported immediately to the TCSS Rescue Crew Leader.
- TCSS carries a First Aid kit to clean wounds and provide band aids. The crew member is responsible to determine if additional care is needed.
- TCSS will provide any assistance the crew member needs to help get proper care of the injury or medical needs. The Cactus Rescue Leader shall be aware of the closest Urgent Care facility and be able to give directions to the facility if needed or arrange for transportation to the facility. If external sources (hospital or Urgent Care) are not required for the minor injury, a note is made on the sign-in sheet but no detailed record is made of the incident and no formal notifications are sent to the TCSS President or Company representative.

### **Significant Injuries or Emergency Situations:**

- All injuries are to be reported immediately to the TCSS Crew Leader and the Company Representative if on site.
- A call to 911 shall be made for any injury that appears to be life threatening, signs of a stroke, person can't walk or stand without severe pain, significant bleeding, or any injury the injured crew member feels paramedics are needed.
- If a crew member(s) is missing, the Rescue Crew Site Supervisor shall initiate a search effort using other willing crew members. If a reasonable search of the area by the crew members turns out to be futile (usually about an hour depending on the rescue site), a call to 911 shall be made for assistance.
- If, in the judgment of the Rescue Crew Leader and Company Representative if on site, external sources (Hospital, Urgent Care, Law Enforcement, Rescue Teams) are required for the incident, a record is made on the sign-in sheet of the incident and the TCSS President and the Company representative are notified via email with details of the incident including action taken and the crew members choices.