

A Rare Find In Your Neighborhood

I'm Steven Glynn, and I'm a recent retiree to the area. A couple of years ago I asked permission to enjoy my pursuit of dragonfly searching at your private preserve, Wes Miller Park. You graciously granted me permission, and I've enjoyed the times I've explored the Sabino Creek area and sought out what might be discovered.

When Wesley Miller developed the Hidden Valley neighborhood, he must have envisioned a quiet realm, with possibilities. Sabino Creek and the natural beauty associated with it would be the backdrop to his broader vision, and it threads through the private park named for him. Such "possibilities" recently took on a historic aspect with the discovery of a very rare dragonfly in the park.

A recent survey of the creek by myself and my colleague Jonathan Batkin, both of us amateur naturalists who have a strong interest in the study of dragonflies, scientifically known as "odonata," revealed the presence of a species called White-tailed Sylph.



The White-tailed Sylph, measuring only 1.5 inches in length, is typically found in Mexico, and its distribution extends into South America. It had been unknown from anywhere in the U.S. until a single individual was first discovered in Arizona in 2007.

Since that initial discovery, the sylph has been found only in southeastern Arizona and southern Texas, perhaps fewer than twenty times, and almost always as a single individual.

However, our recent survey, has revealed multiple individuals, with at least six distinctly marked males seen and photographed. This number is unprecedented, and perhaps most significantly, a presumed female was seen briefly, flying and laying eggs in the creek,

and a mating pair seen briefly. The significance of this is that it would mark the first time that this species has been observed breeding in the United States.

Our goal remains to photograph breeding behavior and hopefully to publish our findings in the peer-reviewed magazine of The Dragonfly Society of the Americas, the leading scientific organization dedicated to the study of odonata.

With appreciation to Pete Cinquemani and the entire Hidden Valley community, I hope this discovery is seen with interest and appreciation of the special natural wonder of the Sabino Creek area you call home.

In deference to the private nature of your community park, we have kept the location of our findings obscured to public records and will respect this as we discuss with other odonata experts on our findings.

If some of your community members are interested, I'd be happy to give a presentation and lead a field trip into the park, and point out the great diversity of damselflies and dragonflies found in the park preserve.

Many thanks to the Hidden Valley Homeowners community.

