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October Water Matters

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Water Matters



Tucson's Haunting Water Tales

This October, Tucson Water dives into the eerie side of our desert oasis. From whispered legends of phantom cowboys to mysterious shadows in historic places, Tucson's relationship with water runs as deep as its history – and sometimes, it's downright spooky!

Join us as we wade through ghost stories and local lore that make our city's waterscape uniquely enchanting. Whether you believe in spirits or just love a good tale, these stories are here to delight – and maybe send a shiver down your spine!

The “Ghost River”

Once a thriving waterway, the Santa Cruz River now flows only in small stretches, earning its nickname as Tucson's “ghost river.” Witnesses tell of a shadowy vaquero appearing on moonlit nights, riding his horse silently along the dry riverbed. His figure drifts through the sand as if retracing a route long lost to time – before vanishing without a trace. Those who glimpse Tucson's phantom cowboy swear the echo of hoofbeats follows them long after the river has gone still.

The Lake at Reid Park



By day, the Reid Park lake is lively with ducks, geese, and children tossing breadcrumbs. But once night falls, the shallow water turns as black as ink, swallowing every trace of light.

Some say a ragged fisherman appears on the far bank, a lantern flickering at his side. His boots leave no splash in the water, yet the sound of slow, deliberate footsteps circles the shoreline. Those who edge closer watch the figure fade into the mist – leaving only the black water, silent and still, as if nothing had been there at all.

Santa Rita Hotel Ripples

At the historic Santa Rita Hotel, guests and staff claimed to see ripples forming across glasses of water in perfectly still rooms, when no one was near. The strange phenomenon, paired with flickering lights, echoing footsteps, and an eerie silence, would happen just before the water stirred. Some say the ripples were the hotel's way of reminding visitors that its past was never fully at rest.

Lake Elmira – The Flooded Underpass

After monsoon storms, the Stone Avenue Underpass transforms into a deep, temporary pool known as "Lake Elmira," named after a daring teen who swam it in 1937. On heavy monsoon nights, Tucsonans say flashes of lightning or a passing car's headlights have been known to reveal a young figure at the water's edge, ready to dive – only to vanish in an instant.

**Tales are based on folklore and legend, shared for entertainment only.*



The Meter Matters! Take Control of your Water Use.

Even a tiny leak of just 0.1 gallons per minute can waste more than 4,300 gallons in a single month – that's over 51,000 gallons a year. Many household leaks are even larger, meaning wasted water and higher bills.

Your water meter is one of the most powerful tools you have for water conservation. A quick meter check can help spot hidden leaks early, help avoid costly water damage, and lower your water bill.

When our Zanjeros (water conservation technicians) perform a water check-up, the first thing they do is check the meter to see if water is flowing when no one is using it. Learning this skill yourself means you can get ahead of problems – and savings – right away.

Here are a few quick tips to get started:

Locate your meter. Most meters are located in the ground at the front curb or in the alley. Pro tip: Use a long screwdriver to open the box cover. Watch out for critters that might be inside!

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Watch a 2-minute video! The [DIY Self-Audit Video Series](#) shows exactly how to read your meter and detect leaks.

Try a full check-up. The Smart Home Water Guide from AMWUA offers step-by-step instructions to track down leaks and discover conservation opportunities at your property. Visit smarthomewaterguide.org to get started.

The bottom line: A few minutes with your water meter can protect your home, conserve thousands of gallons, and put money back in your pocket.

[Smart Home Water Guide](#)

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Zero Waste Tucson is Back!

Clear out your clutter – safely and sustainably.

Join us for a free drive-thru recycling event on Saturday, Nov. 15. Simply load up items you no longer need and drop them off from your car – quick, safe, and eco-friendly.

At the last Zero Waste Tucson event, more than 400 vehicles participated, keeping tons of material out of the landfill. This year you can bring items such as:

- Books
- Expired medications
- Bicycles
- Scrap metal

Mark your calendar and help us beat last year's record – together we can keep

**Pima County
Wastewater Reclamation**



We Have Expanded our Sewer Bill Discount

Save more on your utility services statement!

Beginning October 2, 2025, residential sewer customers may qualify for a 20%, 40%, 60%, or even 80% discount on the wastewater portion of their bill.

To be eligible, you must:

- Be a residential sewer customer
- Have the sewer bill in your name

Call 520-791-5443 to schedule an appointment and determine your eligibility.

Sewer Outreach Subsidy Program

even more out of the landfill!

TucsonZeroWaste.com



Water Matters is a monthly newsletter brought to you by Tucson Water

Tucson Water is a department of the City of Tucson



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