

Hello, Arizona! Glossary Sheet

backcountry – a remote, rural area or wilderness with few residents

biodiverse – short for “biologically diverse” and referring to the variety of animals, plants, insects, and other life forms that inhabit a particular place

biome – the community of plant and animal species that occur in a particular area

caterwaul – a loud, unpleasant howl or cry

cave bacon – deposits of calcium carbonate frequently found in caves and that look like bacon

cave column – formations that occur when stalactites and stalagmites fuse together in caves

chaparral – a plant community filled with tangled and thorny shrubs and bushes

creosote – a medium-sized evergreen shrub with small, pointed green leaves with a waxy coating

haboob – a powerful dust storm created from high winds rushing out of a collapsing thunderstorm

helictite – a twig-like type of stalactite that protrudes horizontally from a cave wall

hogan – a traditional Navajo dwelling made of logs and dirt

igneous – a type of rock formed from solidified magma (extremely hot liquid and semi-liquid rock located under Earth’s surface)

intriguing – interesting, fascinating

javelina – a mammal called a “collared peccary” similar to a wild boar and native to Arizona

lagoon – a shallow body of water separated by a landform from a larger lake or sea

metamorphic rock – rock that has undergone some change due to heat or pressure

monsoon season – a seasonal shift in the wind that causes very wet or very dry conditions

rhyolite – a type of pale volcanic rock

sedimentary rock – a type of rock formed by sediment (solid material that is moved and deposited in a new location)

sentinel – a soldier or guard whose job is to stand and keep watch

sky island – an isolated mountain range surrounded by desert lowlands

soda straw – a long, hollow, thin-walled tubular stalactite found in caves

speleothem – cave formations created over time by mineral deposits, including stalactites, stalagmites, cave columns, helictites, soda straws, and others

spelunking – the hobby of cave exploration

travertine – a type of pale limestone

white-nosed coati – a member of the raccoon family that eats insects and is found in North and South America

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