



Living in the desert is not for everyone.

Most people live in either a urban or suburban setting in a single-family house or an apartment that has municipal services including water, electricity, sewage and other services.

However, people who live in the desert or in areas which do not have accessible municipal services, better appreciate the things that many of us take for granted.

Don Fedock decided in the early 1970s moved to Sonora Desert of Southwest Arizona. He moved to Ajo, Arizona.

Anticipate nothing, enjoy being, want little, use less

"I don't live all that differently from most people. I live in a house, albeit a small one of 11 x 7 feet, built mostly from salvaged materials. A small wood stove heats it--an armful of firewood is plenty for even the coldest days. In the wintertime in the Sonora Desert the temperature fluctuates from a high of about 70 degrees Fahrenheit, 21 degrees Celsius to a low of about 40 degrees Fahrenheit, 4 degrees Celsius. Rarely does it freeze.

During the summer months, the temperature fluctuates from a high of about 105 degrees Fahrenheit, 40 degrees Celsius to a low of about 80 degrees Fahrenheit, 26 degrees Celsius. For cooling, I open the windows or sit outside in the shade and don't exert myself much.

I have electricity--generated by solar (photovoltaic) panels, and stored in batteries. The solar powered energy runs several lights and other appliances.

I have running water--hauled in by barrels, stored in a upslope cistern, and gravity fed to my house. For hot water, I heat it on a propane stove in a basin or bucket. Bathing is by sponge bath (one bucket of hot water), in the winter, and during the summer the water is heated outside by the sun in coils of black tubing, which then goes to the outdoor shower. The water also is used in my flush toilet. The waste water is diverted to a leach field which supports vegetation in that area.

Around my home I have experienced a lot flora and fauna found in the desert. Mule deer are my favorite visitors. Other animals include Javelina (related to Tapirs found in South America), coyotes, grey foxes, jack rabbits, rock squirrels, rattlesnakes, horned toads, iguanas, lizards and scorpions. In the past, I once saw a desert big horn sheep. This was a very exciting visitor to my homestead.

The birds in the area include vultures, woodpeckers, cactus wrens, thrashers, hummingbirds, hawks, finches, sparrows, doves and bats.

Fresh food is preserved in a small propane refrigerator and food is cooked on a gas stove.

So, I don't really live any differently that most urban and suburban dwellers, I just have be more aware of the fact that municipal services are not readily provided.

The physical necessities of living in the desert are relatively easy to come by. The far greater task is to acquire the ability to be comfortable in the land of quiet, space and heat. The key, I'd say, is to become as the plants and animals around you. *Anticipate nothing, enjoy being, want little, use less.*"