



Sedona

*Helping to protect
National Forest Lands*



Branching Out

Friends of the Forest

Volume 2009, Issue 3

May 2009

From the President

Roy Julian

What a fantastic group of people to work with!! I wanted to start this column by thanking all of you for the overwhelming responsiveness, cooperation and enthusiasm that you all give to our organization and the forest.

A couple of years ago, when **Mike Ward** called and asked if I would consider being his VP, the first thing I did was to call **Al Cornell** for his thoughts on the matter. Since he is a former president of the Friends and someone I highly respect, I knew that whatever Al offered would be sound advice. He said, "If you ever want to be an officer for a volunteer organization, the Friends is the one to choose. They are a great bunch of people to work with, and will support you and back you up when you need help."

Well, Al was exactly right! Almost without exception, everyone I have asked for help or assistance in doing something has readily agreed and done a great job with whatever the task was. Whether it was trying to fill positions for the Board, or various committee assignments, people in the Friends came through.

New members like **Janet** and **Jerry Walters** took on two of our busiest committees in VIS and Cultural Resources, and have done a wonderful job with them.

Sonya Landholm, a long-time member, came aboard as the new Membership secretary, and has done a great job keeping our membership straight. **Noreen Lisowski** agreed to give **Ruth** and **Toni** (big shoes to fill there) a break by taking over as Hospitality chair. **Carol Wirkus** has done a great job as Publicity chair in getting the word out about the Friends.

Dean Campbell saw the need for a new PA system for the Friends and jumped in, doing all the research and background for purchasing for one.



President Roy Julian thanks Bill Stafford for his support of the Friends and wishes him well in retirement

Photo by Mike Vitek

Helen Campbell continues to contribute many, many hours helping other “Friends” volunteer groups get going and continues to be a superlative spokesperson for our group with Washington, other forest districts and other organizations.

When Dean asked for an assistant treasurer, **Jan Lisowski** stepped forward immediately and volunteered for the job, which can be very time-consuming and tedious.

And of course, many of you have remained as chairs, Board members, committee workers and in other assignments that you have been fulfilling so well for several years.

When I called **Chuck Jenkins** a short time ago about heading up a special project to restore the old J. J. Thompson spring house, he immediately agreed to take on that task. **George Coombes** jumped right in with the ad hoc SOP committee writing team, and has contributed significantly with his wealth of knowledge and leadership skills in that area.

And you should all know that behind the scene, **Carol Wirkus**, our VP, has been working very hard on numerous extra projects to help us as we grow and move forward. For example, she has been single-handedly updating our membership brochure and seeing that it is printed properly. She has been instrumental in writing several SOPs for us, as well as organizing them into an SOP manual with a table of contents.

These are just a few examples of the many outstanding individuals we have working in the Friends.

Our organization embodies what volunteerism is all about – and we DO have fun while doing it! Sedona and the surrounding communities are fortunate indeed to have such a dedicated, talented and resourceful group of people work-

ing for the betterment of our area.

Other news:

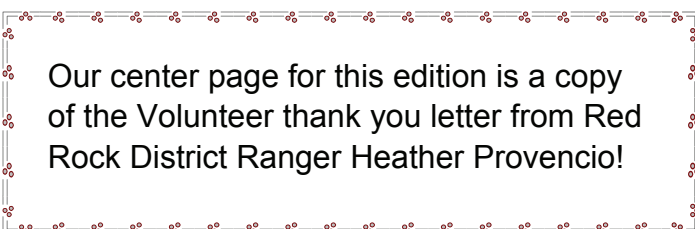
Some of you doing Trail Patrol in Boynton Canyon may have noticed four 6-foot crosses to the left of the trail just as you pass Enchantment Resort and drop into the canyon floor. These were put up by **Bob Bear** of the Yavapai-Apache Tribe to commemorate their creation site, with permission from the Forest Service. Everyone has been asked by the Forest Service to leave them alone.

The Volunteer Coordinator position has been filled by **Kelly Lawrence**, who is working on her master’s degree in sociology and has recently come on board with the RRRD. We all look forward to working with her and having a full-time, dedicated Volunteer Coordinator.

Jan Lisowski was voted in by the Board as our new assistant treasurer. He will be assisting Dean for the remainder of this year while learning the intricacies of the treasurer’s job. If all goes well, Jan will potentially become the treasurer in two years when Dean steps down.

Al Cornell and I led a nature walk along Oak Creek last month, exclusively for members of the Friends. From the feedback we received, it appeared that all had a good time learning about some of the native plants and various uses the ancients made of them. This special activity is an example of one of the additional benefits of belonging to the Friends.

Be sure to record your volunteer hours and report them to your committee chair or to **Bill Kusner**. Have a great summer! Roy



Our center page for this edition is a copy of the Volunteer thank you letter from Red Rock District Ranger Heather Provencio!

Membership

Sonya Landholm

Since the last Newsletter report, Sedona Friends of the Forest have increased in number by eight. Several of our new members agreed to be interviewed for a short biographical "Get Acquainted" sketch.

Jackie Peters, a realtor for 35 years, tells a different story than the usual "Red Rock Fever" as her reason for moving to Sedona in 1994. Jackie decided it was time to leave California after she was mugged in broad daylight, and Sedona seemed like a safe, quiet choice. Jackie, a resident of the Village of Oak Creek, has been trained in VIS.

Sylvester and **Judy Jagla** moved here from Akron, OH in 1999. The area's combination of climate and great hiking opportunities appealed to them. Judy works three days a week for the Chamber of Commerce in the Uptown Visitor's Center. Syl is starting in VIS at the Red Rock Visitor Information Center. Since they like to hike, Judy is also considering Trail Patrol.

Wilson and **Lee Flight** are residents of Concord, Mass. and will soon become seasonal Sedonans. Their friends and local FOFers, **Kevin** and **Rita Harding**, made their membership possible.

Other new members who could not be reached for information are **Chris Cormaci** of Cornville, **Laura Kelly** and **James Early**.

A most hearty welcome to you all! We hope that you find a niche in FOF that feels comfortable, worthwhile, and fun for you. We do welcome your involvement at whatever level works for you.

Sonya Landholm

Publicity

Carol Wirkus

Special thanks to **Larry Frei** for writing a wonderful newspaper article about volunteering at the Visitor Center. Larry is one of those multi-talented, generous people who can be seen at the Visitor Center, Palatki, V-V, or working with the trail crew. The Friends are fortunate to have members like Larry.

This June the Friends of the Forest will celebrate 15 years of service to the Red Rock Ranger District. **Georgia Munsell** researched our roots and history, with help from archivist **Helen Campbell**. Following is the history of the Friends.

Carol Wirkus

Friends of the Forest Celebrates 15 Years

By Georgia Munsell

Friends of the Forest celebrates 15 years of service to the Red Rock Ranger District of the Coconino National Forest this June.

The idea for Friends of the Forest (FOF) came out of a forum sponsored by the Sedona Academy in early 1994 entitled "Building Partnerships with the Forest Service."

Original Friends of the Forest member, **Rusty Swavely**, recalls the 3-day forum as an intense process. "We had to read a number of research documents before attending the forum, and then we worked in discussion groups on a variety of issues."

The topic for the forum was selected for several reasons. Swavely explains, "Getting over a million visitors a year to this beautiful area was putting a huge strain on the forest and on the Forest Service's ability to manage that impact."

In addition, there were differences of opinion among the Sierra Club, the Sedona community and the local Forest Service. **Jim Eaton**, an-

other original FOF member, explained, “We really wanted to figure out how to bring people together because we knew the Forest Service had a lot of work to do but they didn’t have sufficient manpower or money.”

As committed as the first members were, the group would not have succeeded had it not been for two other events happening at the same time. “First,” as Eaton recalls, “with the new Clinton administration, there was a changing of the guard at the National Forest Service and the objective to prioritize recreation moved from the bottom to closer to the top. Second, the Red Rock District got a new District Ranger, **Ken Anderson**, who was community-oriented and willing to listen.”

The new group of nine worked feverishly the first half of 1994 to write the by-laws, set goals, write press releases, design a logo, and incorporate as a 501(c) non-profit. New members were quickly added because many people wanted to help make a difference on what seemed like a much neglected national forest. The first FOF President, **Mary Lee Dunning**, explained in the Red Rock News, “The primary goals of Friends of the Forest are to help the Forest Service maintain trails and cultural resources, reduce the damage caused by increasing human use, assist in education and improve communication with the community.”

Fifteen years later, those goals have not changed. As current President **Roy Julian** states, “I believe that due to the vision and foresight of our founding leaders, the mission of the Friends today is essentially unchanged. The one thing that has changed is that because of the tremendous increase in visitation in the Sedona area, our mission is even more vital and challenging today than it was 15 years ago.”

One of the six first committees was Trail Maintenance and Construction, headed for 9 years by founding member, **Norm Herkenham**. “There were so many trails and most were not maintained,” Norm explains. Norm mapped out all the existing trails and then met with Sedona Ranger District staff, where together they selected which trails to upgrade and maintain, including building links where it made sense for trails to connect. In recognition of Norm’s hard work, the Forest Service named a trail starting at the high school and connecting to the Old Post Road Trail in his honor, the Herkenham Trail.

Friends of the Forest now has 25 committees with diverse volunteer opportunities to meet individual talents and interests, including patrolling trails; staffing the Red Rock Visitor Center; guiding visitors at Palatki and V-V cultural heritage sites; and conducting weekly water sampling at Oak Creek.

Friends of the Forest Sedona is highly regarded nationally for what volunteers have accomplished and for the synergy between the volunteers and staff of the Red Rock Ranger District. Appreciation of that relationship is expressed by current District Ranger, **Heather Provencio**, “The FOF are the heartbeat of the Red Rock District, the glue that holds us all together. The public demands on this District are heavy and sometimes feel insurmountable, but working side by side with the Friends, there hasn't been anything we couldn't accomplish. And it isn't just work that the Friends help us accomplish, they simultaneously boost our employees' morale and keep us anchored to what the public at large desires from the Forest Service.”

Nora Rasure, Forest Supervisor of the Coconino National Forest, also voices admiration of the relationship, “The Friends of the Forest are

like your best friend, the great neighbor, or the trusted family member that you can always count on to be there when you need some help and support. I always come away from my interactions with members of the Friends of the Forest proud to work with such dedicated people.”

Having contributed over 200,000 volunteer hours and \$135,000 to projects in the Red Rock Ranger District, Friends of the Forest can be proud of many significant accomplishments in its 15 years of existence.

Highlights of 15 Years

1994 - June 1, Friends of the Forest (FOF) officially forms as a 501(c)3 non-profit.

1995 - FOF volunteers complete Soldiers Pass Trail and Forest Service installs plaque at trail head thanking FOF. Membership grows to 153.

1996 - FOF receives national recognition for volunteer efforts from U.S. Forest Service Chief.

1997 - Volunteers finish work on 3 trails – Jack’s Canyon, Courthouse Butte & Broken Arrow.

1998 - Bell Rock Trail dedicated. 11,000 annual volunteer hours.

1999 - 16,620 annual volunteer hours.

2000 - FOF volunteers restore Van Deren historical cabin.

2001 - Volunteers begin work on Munds Wagon Trail.

2002 - Orchard Committee created to save and care for trees at West Fork.

2003 - FOF receives 7 matching grants of \$7,000 from the National Forest Foundation.

2004 - FOF gives Red Rock Ranger District \$25,000 for projects.

2005 - 22,300 annual volunteer hours.

2006 FOF gives \$9,800 for Brins fire rehabilitation and \$5,000 for materials to help rebuild Sterling Pass & N. Wilson Mt. trails.

2007 - FOF begins support for River Rangers cleaning up Verde River.

2008 - FOF receives \$460,000 in grants. 24,000 annual volunteer hours. Membership grows to 384.

2009 - In 15 years, FOF has contributed over 200,000 volunteer hours and over \$135,000 to Red Rock Ranger District projects.

Cultural Resources

Jerry Walters

The annual V-Bar-V Days event held this past March 28th and 29th was a huge success and went off well despite the flu that afflicted the ranks of volunteers. Many thanks to those individuals who helped make the event a success!



George Witteman captivates the crowd at V-Bar-V Days

Photo by Jerry Walters

I would like to give special thanks to the following people who volunteered, on very short notice, to staff the site and office at V-Bar-V when one of the site hosts was unexpectedly hospitalized: Spence Gustav, Vickie Garrard, Larry Frei, George Witteman, Andy Beeler, Don Watson, and Nancy Easter.

A brief history of the committee

The Cultural Resources Committee was formed in September 1995 in response to a growing problem with graffiti in the Verde Valley at cultural heritage sites such as Palatki and Red Cliffs. The committee began with six members and quickly attracted several more. Six of the initial group are still active in the committee. Initial effort consisted of protecting the site (Palatki) on weekends and holidays, walking back and forth from the ruins to the rock art alcoves, providing information to the visitors. At that time Palatki was open 24 hours a day with no controls! It remained that way until 1997. The amount of graffiti dropped off noticeably after oversight was begun. Coverage at V-Bar-V was begun the following year.

Since 2004 the average annual number of visitors at Palatki has been 24,700. This number has been increasing by 4.7% per year. For Fiscal Year (FY) 09 (through April), the number of visitors is up by 11.4%!

The number of visitors to V-Bar-V has been increasing more dramatically. Since 2004 the average annual number of visitors to V-Bar-V has been 9,439. This number has been increasing by 6.0% per year. The increase for FY 08 was 17.8% (11,123 visitors). For FY 09 we are up 31.1% from the same period last year!

It is clear that these sites are well attended and that the need for preservation, protection, and visitor education is increasing. Since FY 06,

the committee members have been volunteering over 4,200 hours each year. Unfortunately the number of people to contribute those hours has been decreasing. There are 50 volunteer opportunities at Palatki each month and another 36 at V-Bar-V. If you are interested in helping protect our cultural heritage sites and learning more about the Palatki, Honanki and V-Bar-V sites, consider joining the Cultural Resource and Protection Committee. Please call or email (culturalresources@friendsoftheforestsedona.org) for more information.

Jerry Walters 284-1339

Visitor Information Services

Janet Walters and Noreen Lisowski

The spring break rush at the Forest Service Visitor Center appears to be over or does it? Approximately fifteen hundred visitors poured through the doors each day during the months of February through April. Yet very few visitors had to wait in line for service even during the 10 am to 2 pm midday rush. Briefly stated, THIS COMMITTEE PULLED IT OFF! The committee leaders want to express their sincere appreciation to all members of VIS for the support given to the Forest Service during these high visitor traffic months. Even special events such as book signings and wildflower exhibits didn't unsettle the Frontliners. But don't relax for too long as summer holidays are rapidly approaching.

Can you picture yourself as a Frontliner assisting visitors? Just as the unnamed volunteer pictured below, you can feel confident and well-dressed in a crisp Forest Service volunteer vest and jaunty (optional) volunteer cap. And don't worry if you think you "don't know enough" to be a Frontliner, because the Forest Service and

your future coworkers ensure that you will be ready to tackle questions from visitors like a pro. You'll attend a day-long Frontliner class filled with fun tips and information then shadow experienced Frontliners for as long as you like until you are comfortable with the tasks. And who is our mystery Frontliner? Hint: he works on Saturdays.



The Visitor Center needs you!

Fortunately, the ranks of the VIS Committee recently increased as new FOF member, **Sylvester "Syl" Jagla**, signed on for not just one but two weekly shifts. The accompanying photo shows Syl receiving his Forest Service volunteer vest from FS employee **Genny Riner**. After his incredibly short graduation ceremony, Syl was quickly back to work at the Frontliner desk.

Remember to pick up a copy of **Red Rock Country Cooks - Second Helping** at the ANHA bookstore in the Visitor Center. This jointly published cookbook is a wonderful example of great teamwork among the Friends of the Forest, the Arizona Natural History Association and the Forest Service. At \$10 each, the cookbooks make great gifts.



New member Syl Jagla receives his volunteer vest.

Best wishes to **Dave Murray** and **Shirley Heyer**, who are taking health sabbaticals. Saturday crew members **Laura Jean** and **Andy Beeler** have been frequently traveling east to tend to an elderly relative. We miss all of you. **Lois Johnson**, **Paulette Mari**, and **Pat Witteman** are heading north for the summer after helping considerably during the spring break rush. With the absence of these folks, the committee needs additional substitute Frontliners and several Frontliners who would like to adopt shifts on weekend afternoons. A Frontliner class is usually offered on the fourth Tuesday of each month by **Genny Riner** of the Forest Service. Contact Janet at 284-1339 or jwalters@esedona.net if you would like to train as a Frontliner or would like to take a refresher course.

Janet Walters & Noreen Lisowski



Trail Maintenance & Construction

Bob Tener & Rick Zabor

Since mid March we have worked in many areas. Starting with **Little Horse Trail** we improved the tread in numerous areas, built a retaining wall and rebuilt 14 drainages. Next, **West Clear Creek Trail** where we did a little swim to get across the creek several times, no snorkels were used. In addition we had to walk around a group camping right on the trail, we were disappointed since no coffee was offered! We cleared flood debris from steps, brushed & cleaned drains. At the same time **Margs Draw** had **Gene Rector** (the Trail Machine) & **Al Gilson** repairing 18 check dams & drainages.

AB Young Trail was again brushed but further up. This time we took oxygen as we reached 19k', no I guess that's just what it felt like. **Junipine Resort** was kind enough again, to let us stage from their parking lot. Hiking from the lot we noticed the winter storms knocked down a phone line which we had to walk over & under as we made our way to the trail head. **Turkey Creek T/H** needed some rocks placed to make the parking area more robust. **Sarah Belcher** (Forest Service Landscape Architect) directed us. **Mike Vitek** pulled and winched several rocks with his Jeep. The rocks followed his orders as if dogs on a leash and consequently the job was completed much quicker. We then went down Turkey Creek Trail maybe a half -1mile where we did some drainage repairs and constructed a rock reinforced rolling dip. We were joined by a photographer from **Sedona Monthly Magazine** who took some photo's of us in action. Look for the crew in the June issue and no, we don't do autographs.

The new parking lot on the east side of SR179,

I'll call it **Northern Bell Vista**, is where we worked next. We installed a post berm and large rock to control erosion. Also we removed an old gate, signs and posts all due to the new SR179 being a defined access road. On **Cookstove Trail** we repaired and installed new steps, repaired the tread and revegetated social trails. Finally we worked on the fence at **Boyn-ton Canyon T/H**. Fence posts were replaced, H braces repaired and wire restrung as needed. A sign for **Deadmans Pass Trail** was installed and 2 social trails were revegetated.

Rick

Patrol Hotshots

Gene Rector

Trees, Trees, Trees

The Patrol Hotshot crew has been very busy this season from October 2008 through April 2009 doing the regular maintenance on many trails and especially removing trees. More than average days of high wind this spring brought down many dead trees in the old burn and beetle-kill areas. We frequently returned to Sterling Pass, Vultee Arch and North Wilson to remove trees. A total of **341** trees have been removed from across hiking trails in the RRRD. Some of these are easily removed but others have required the four or six-foot crosscut saw. All the crew seem to enjoy the engineering challenges of removing the trees safely without getting the saws in a bind. The largest diameter tree was a green **36 inch ponderosa**. Other work consisted of: cleaning and repairing **783** rolling dips; **111** drainages; **92** check dams; **36** steps; and rocking and brushing **70** miles of trail.

We also have great trail patrol opportunities to visit with hikers who come along and stop to

discuss our work and ask questions about the trails. They are very appreciative of what we are doing to maintain the trails.

Work was done on thirty different trails: Andante; Baldwin, Bear Mt; Bear Sign; Bell; Boynton Canyon; Brins Mesa; Carroll Canyon; Chimney Rock; Cibola Pass; Cookstove; David Miller; Dawa; Dry Creek; H S; Jim Thompson; Jordan; Long Canyon; Munds Mt; OK; Ridge; Schnebly Hill; Schuermann Mt; Secret Canyon; Soldiers Pass; Sterling Pass; Tea Cup; Templeton; Vultee Arch; Wilson Mt.

Our crew usually works in groups of three or four at a time and volunteered an impressive **1255 hours** this season . We have three new members this year: **Jerry and Deneise Piepiora and Rick Baldauf**. The returning members include: **Kevin Harding, Al Gilson, Bob Tener, John True, Buck Packard, Joe Landholm, Roy Julian, Darl Rector, Ron Rusk, Dave Nokes, Marie Fox, Dan Aragaki, Rick Zabor, and Gene Rector**.

A big thank you to all these hard working volunteers !! Gene Rector



Marie Fox and Darl Rector cutting a tree
On North Wilson Trail

Fire Lookouts

Rick Zabor

The fire season is upon us as I write this in mid May. The season usually runs from mid May through September. Fire restrictions look to be inevitable due to the lack of rain and the wind has only exasperated these very dry conditions. Then on May 18th a storm rolled through with rain, hail and over 100 reported lightning strikes. This in turn made the Forest susceptible to many fires & a call was made to ask for more LO. coverage. The volunteers are covering both Mingus Mt. & Apache Maid Lookouts (LO) this season. We'll focus our energies for an extended weekend unless more storms visit us. The weekend is when most human caused fires are started.

Al Gilson has recalibrated the fire finder, reinstalled the map holders and shelves after an interior refurbishment at historical Mingus Mt. LO. The volunteers for this season and returning from last year are: **Mike Vitek, Al Cornell, Frank Wirkus, Chuck Jenkins, Pete Bertelson, Al Gilson** & myself. In addition I want to welcome 2 new volunteers **Mickey Gershtenson** and **Ken Zoll**. More news to come as the season progresses.

Rick Zabor



Dan Aragaki and Gene Rector cutting
a huge Ponderosa in Sterling Canyon

Photo by Kevin Harding



Sedona

Friends of the Forest

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IMPORTANT DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR

**Wednesday, June 17, 2009 - 9:00 AM - Ranger Station
FOF Quarterly Board of Directors and Members meeting
All Members are welcome**



Future Board of Director Meetings:
Wednesday, September 16, 2009
Wednesday December 9, 2009

The Friends of the Forest, Inc. is dedicated to assisting the U. S. Forest Service in maintaining, protecting, and restoring the scenic beauty and natural and cultural resources of forest lands for the enjoyment and use of present and future generations. The objective of this nonprofit, volunteer group is to work in partnership with the U. S. Forest Service in tasks it does not have the manpower or the funds to accomplish on its own.