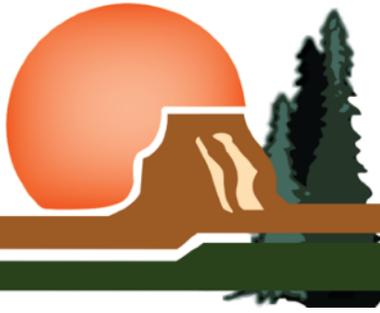


December 2022



# Branching Out

Sedona Friends of the Forest

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## From the President

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Greetings Friends,

My term is coming to an end and I would like to express my sincere appreciation to everyone for your kind support these past two years. When **Craig Swanson** handed me the virtual gavel, it was a time of transition. Craig had the difficult duty of shutting the Friends of the Forest (FOF) down because of Covid. He kept us safe. When I stepped into this role, it was up to me to figure out how to get us back up and running and still keep us safe. Navigating protocols and worrying about the volunteers and employees was tricky business. In the beginning, it was serious. The news was reporting awful outcomes. Making the types of decisions that would get us active again while keeping our distance was challenging. It was with thoughtful collaboration with the Forest Service (FS) leadership that got us back to work. I appreciate that partnership. We were in it together and we still are. Even now, our community is at medium Covid level—it's still out there. We're still out there!

I want to thank everyone who attended our annual membership meeting and recognition event last month at the Beaver Creek Work Center. During the business part of our meeting, we thanked departing Board Member **Brian Painchaud**. We also voted on the slate of Board Members that included members who are continuing on the Board – **Spence Gustav**, **Bob Haizmann**, and **Bea Logan** as well as new Board Members – **Cynthia Belowski**, **Peter Belowski**, **Cynthia Malowitz**, **Adrienne Pichette**, and **Pat Quinn**. During the picnic, the FS staff fed us the food that retired FS staff cooked up in their Dutch ovens. That's right – food returned finally! Those were some scrumptious ribs! It was fun watching the winners of the raffle prizes. Even more fun is seeing the newest members of the FOF mingling among the original members of the FOF. Almost 30 years of service all united.

As a reminder, our next meeting is only a few days away – Wednesday, December 7 at 9 am at the Keep Sedona Beautiful building located at 360 Brewer Rd, Sedona. It will also have a zoom element to it as we will try for the Hybrid meeting. A key item of business will be to formally appoint officers for the 2023 calendar year. Candidates are **Jerry Checchia, President; Melissa Pontikes, Vice-President; Joe Pokorski, Treasurer; Tom Cloonan, Assistant Treasurer; Lynn Zonakis, Secretary**.

As always, members are encouraged to attend this meeting to keep informed on current activities and upcoming plans. Come a little early and we will have some light refreshments provided by the Hospitality Group spearheaded by **Adrienne Pichette**. **Deneise Piepiora** had led this group prior to the shutdowns and boy is she keeping busy with her Search & Rescue – thank you Deneise for your service.

Board and Membership meetings next year will be held on these dates:

March 1, 2023 9 am Hybrid / Admin Bldg. & zoom

May 3, 2023 9 am Hybrid / Admin Bldg. & zoom

September 6, 2023 9 am Hybrid / Admin Bldg. & zoom  
Annual Meeting/Volunteer Appreciation Event – TBD  
in November 2023

December 6, 2023 9 am Hybrid / Admin Bldg. & zoom

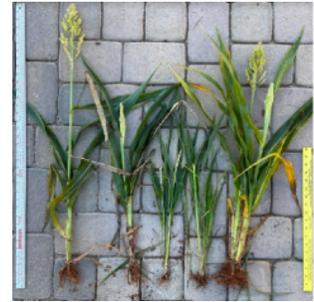
Thank you all for helping make FOF such an outstanding organization. We ARE dedicated to maintaining, protecting and restoring the scenic beauty of our National Forest lands in the Sedona area and beyond. You are a passionate lot with great knowledge and spirit. It is a pleasure to volunteer with you.

**Annie Glickstein, President**

## Wildlife, Fish, Rare Plants

A few years ago, Janie got a report from a volunteer (Dale Evans) that he was finding an unusual plant – turned out it was either millet or sorghum – such as that found in bird

seed mixes. Not sure which – here’s the difference: millet refers to grains from the *Panicum miliaceum* plant, while sorghum refers to grains from the *Sorghum bicolor*.



Janie asked for all of our membership (not just our committee) to keep an eye out. An email was sent with the subject “Sorghum Wars” and the response was immediate. The beauty of FOF is that we have many different committees that contain varied expertise. When we pull together with focus, the outcome is incredible. So far over 2,500 plants have been removed.

we don’t want to take a chance and we don’t want to allow more seed to be establish in the soil.

If you see it, report it (GPS, pictures, trail, number of potential plants, etc.) where, when, and about how many plants were treated, so we can track how extensive this invasive is. Send information to Annie at ([wildlife@fofsedona.org](mailto:wildlife@fofsedona.org)).

It could be that we saw a flush this year only because of the better-than-average monsoon precipitation, but

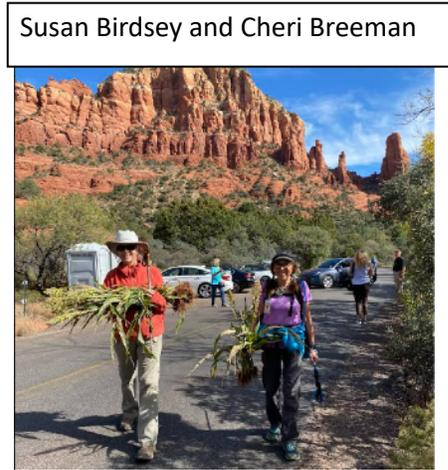
Trail Patrol members jumped right in to mitigate the Sorghum plants while out on a group hike.



David Terrell



Carol Does



Susan Birdsey and Cheri Breeman

For those who see and want to “treat” these plants, the protocol is to use a small pruning clipper or kitchen scissors is helpful in removing the seed head stems. The plants are easily pulled by grasping firmly at the base and giving a tug. The more mature seed heads are visible from a distance, but now that we are late in the growing season, the smaller plants are starting to form seed heads that haven’t erupted

enough to be seen except at a distance of 10-15 feet or less.

There’s a safety issue regarding reaching into low limb areas; Eye protection of some sort is recommended. Cut and pack out the seed heads. Pull the plant and leave its roots exposed to the sun.

This problem is highly likely to occur wherever forest land borders residential areas (and we have a lot of trails that do just that). Hugh Stelson reported “not a plant was found that was more than 200 or 300 yards from some human habitation. Therefore, I would postulate that these plants are probably spread by civilized birds from feeders that do not go far into the forest. Probably not the jays, but finches and sparrows etc. The weather probably promoted germination and certainly they are seeding. It is unclear

whether the seeds would survive winter and germinate spontaneously in the spring but it seems possible. Whether they depend on a wet summer is also suspected since I don’t think I have ever seen these in the desert before.”

**Annie Glickstein**

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## Volunteer Opportunity

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### All Authors

Are you willing to put pen to paper? Or fingers to keyboard? Just eight hundred words on a topic of your choice will get your byline in the Sedona Red Rock News. Friends of the Forest continues to access a once monthly column in the "Serving Sedona" news space. This is a use or lose opportunity which other local organizations would covet, if we let it go.

Currently, we need a coordinator of these news articles as well as a volunteer author each month. Coordinating this activity is simple: helping to generate article topics, communicating guidelines to authors, editing submittals, sending articles to the Red Rock News on a prescribed schedule, and transmitting articles to the FOF webmaster for posting on the website.

Possible future article topics? Partner with a Forest Service resource manager on a topic which is front and center in their work (Janie Agyagos has limitless ideas). Take a look inside a Friends of the Forest project or activity of interest. Educate the community about public land stewardship or safe recreation. Explore what motivates our volunteers. Highlight local archaeology, a piece of FOF history, or hot topics on the Forest Service agenda. Research and write about a native plant or animal.

If you are ready to release your inner author, or help FOF with coordination of this activity, I am happy to help get you going.

[jennifer.young@fosedona.org](mailto:jennifer.young@fosedona.org)

# Statistical Summary

## Volunteer Hours

The Friends' hours were severely impacted by the restrictions and closures caused by the pandemic and wild land fires over the last several years. The pandemic and closures continued to disproportionately affect our committees even during FY22 as the wide variability in

hours demonstrates. Overall, the FY22 total was a dramatic increase from FY21 and more in line with FY20.

Here's the recap of the hours by committee for FY22, compared to the last two years:

Committee	FY22 Hours	FY21 Hours	FY20 Hours	FY22 % of Total
Air Quality/Water Sampling	286	72	239	0.9%
Cultural Resources	7,085	4,776	5,691	23.4%
Graffiti Removal	1,438	1,884	1,839	4.7%
Interpretive Pgm	94	68	350	0.3%
River Rangers	321	75	229	1.1%
Special Projects*	1,350	673	262	4.5%
Trail Maint&Const	1,972	1,446	1,767	6.5%
Trail Patrol	11,227	10,555	11,534	37.1%
VIS	1,211	512	2,006	4.0%
Wildlife/Fish/Plants	2,888	2,313	4,309	9.5%
Admin/Meetings	2,425	1,616	1,663	8.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30,297</b>	<b>23,991</b>	<b>29,888</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\*FY22 includes 865 hours for the new Trail Ambassador (Preventive Search and Rescue) project.

Overall, a total of 228 members volunteered their time during this fiscal year (October 2021 thru September 2022), with an average of 132.87 hours per active member. We had 13 members who each contributed in excess of 500 hours, including two who had over 1,000 hours! Wow! Here's the list:

500 Club (Members with 500+ hours in FY22)	
Harris, Michael	1,619.00
Neil, Garry	1,292.00
Glickstein, Anne	998.01
Gustav, Spence	918.50
Walters, Jerry	875.35
McClimans, Don	854.00
Checchia, Jerry	755.76
Nuez, Christhine	733.46
Evans, Dale	691.95
Walters, Janet	661.25
Atkinson, Rhett	602.75
Logan, Bea	574.75
Losse, John	573.05

As a reminder, please report ALL hours (including Admin hours for Committee chairs and all Trail Patrol hours by individual members) as soon as possible at the end of each month, but no later than the 7<sup>th</sup> of the next month. This allows us to consolidate and update the hours in each member's NEON profile in a timely fashion.

Alan Glickstein

# Graffiti Removal Team

Greetings fellow volunteers.

First off let me say that I am a little excited to announce that Jim White has kindly agreed to be my Co-Chair, Thanks Jim!!

We have been busy cleaning up a few sites, West Fork ,Devils Bridge and Soldiers Pass arches to name a few. The number of actual reports we are getting is lower than usual. I'd like to think that there is less graffiti out there and by us cleaning up sites regularly it keeps the "copy cats" to a minimum.. If you do see graffiti while out on the trails please report it via the graffiti report app or sending an email to [graffiti@fosedona.org](mailto:graffiti@fosedona.org).

If you don't have the App and have had the basic training send me an email and I can have Bob Haizmann send you the link.

Lastly one of our amazing volunteers has been experimenting with ways to remediate tree carvings. She has come up with a paste that is made from flour and other natural ingredients like powdered ginger, green tea & charcoal. You can also use dirt and leaves to blend in the color to match the tree. This works better when the weather is a little warmer and on older carvings. The fresher carvings need oxygen to heal first, but the older ones can be camouflaged with this paste. We are still experimenting with this and got the ok from the Forest Service biologist & botanist so stay tuned for more info on that.

I hope everyone has a safe and Happy Holiday,  
Until next year,  
**Jerry & Chase**



Top L - R  
Tree repair, Glenn,Gary & Vicki cleaning paint off boulder, Glen cleaning Wall of Shame



Beaver Creek  
Day Use Area



Devils Bridge

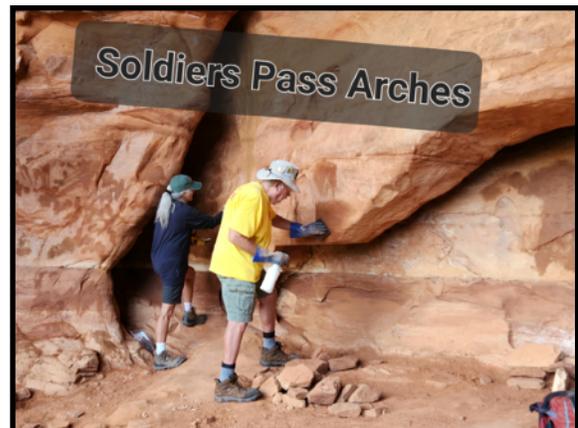
wall of shame

Bottom L - R

Glen and Rod in West Fork, Cleaning Soldiers Pass Arches



West Fork



Soldiers Pass Arches

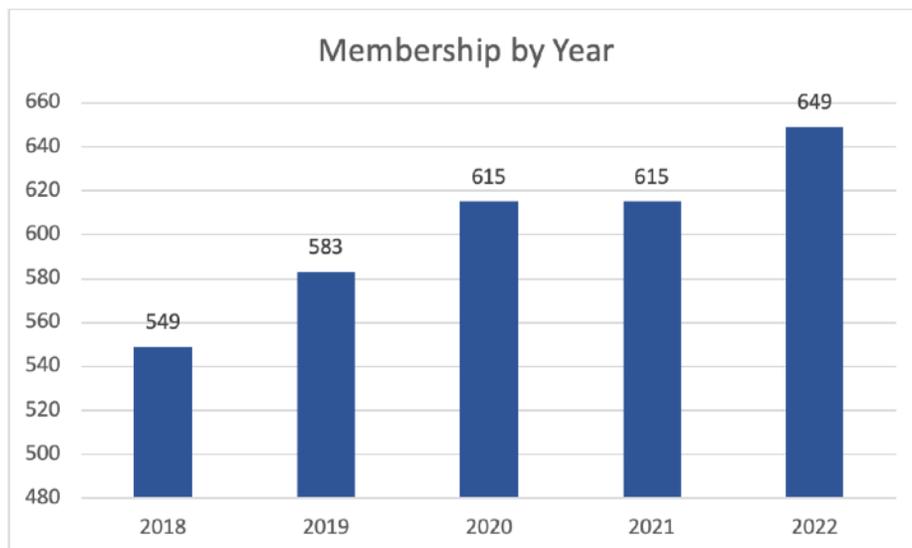
# Membership

Our membership as of November 23, 2022 is 649. Since our last newsletter, 23 new members have joined Friends of the Forest: **Karen Bird, Henry Brown, Ruby Brown, Angelo Davis, Barbara Davis, Shelley Ekmanis, David Gorney, Gail Hart, Jenny Jahraus, Anna Malbos, Stephane Malbos, Keek Mensing, Joan Neri, Robert Neri, Rob O'Brien, Dennis Perchak, Denny Quirk, Laurie Quirk, Deb Reed, Judy Sabo, Erin Sharaf, Amy Verstegen, Mark Verstegen.**

Our New Member Event was held on September 22 at Keep Sedona Beautiful and drew an excellent crowd that was keen to join Friends of the Forest. In addition, the first of our membership renewal communications went out. If you haven't yet renewed your membership for 2023, please consider doing so before the end of the year.

Craig Swanson

FOF Membership Data as of 11/23/2022 (using calendar years)				
		Annual	Life	Total
2022	New Members Added since our last newsletter	18	5	27
	Past Members not Renewing for 2022	67		
	Current Membership as of 11/23/2022	238	411	649
2021	New Members Added in 2021	46	14	60
	Past Members not Renewing for 2021	60		
	Membership at the end of 2021	224	391	615
2020	New Members Added in 2020	52	27	79
	Past Members not Renewing for 2020	47		47
	Membership at end of 2020			615



## Trail Patrol

Trail Patrol members keep stepping up with **Marjorie Terrell** leading a TP hike to Harding Springs in September and **Carol Dores** leading a November hike from Mystic to Chapel. David Cox also led two New Member hikes in November - "a little bit of walking and a lot of talking" about all things Trail Patrol. We also had two educational hikes led by **Scott Newth** to Honanki this month and will be looking to bring back

geology, wildflowers and bird hikes this spring. And, to close out and welcome 2022/2023, look for news of "The Last Chance" and "The First Chance" Trail Patrol Hikes December 31<sup>st</sup> and New Year's Day. Best wishes for the Holidays and looking forward to the coming year.

**Dale Evans**



## Water & Air

Our volunteers will begin collecting and processing water samples from Fossil Creek monthly, beginning in February 2023. A few weeks ago, some of us trained with scientists from the U.S. Forest Service and Arizona Department of Environmental Quality. This is a two year study that began in November 2021 and will conclude in November 2023. The study will analyze human impact on the water quality in Fossil Creek, which is a highly recreated area. Fossil Creek was closed to the public after Ike's Backbone Fire, but reopened a few weeks ago.

After an almost 2 year hiatus, our volunteers are back to changing air filters at Fossil Creek. This project is in

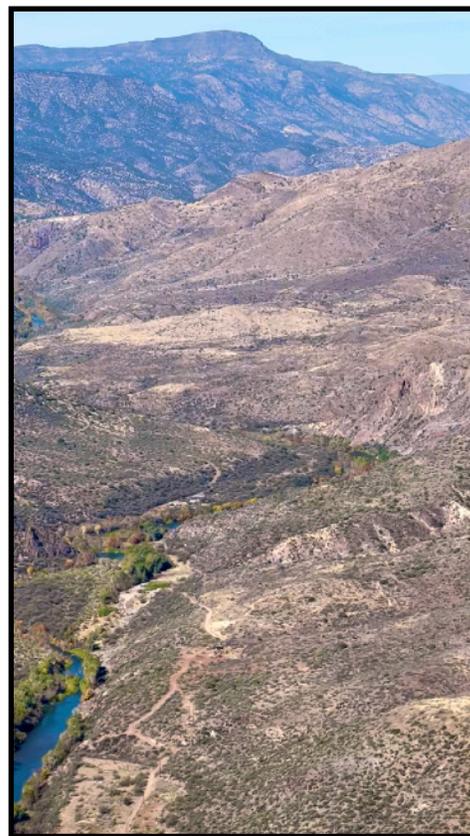
conjunction with scientists from U.C. Davis and the USFS. The scientists analyze air samples taken from the Mazatzal Wilderness area. Brian Painchaud and I traveled to the filter station in November and got everything running. Amazingly, the fire didn't destroy the shed, but it got close to it. The only problem we encountered was with the display panel, but thanks to Jim Manning and Jerry Checchia, it was replaced recently. We have some new volunteers and we're working on getting everyone trained at this time.

**Cynthia Malowitz**, Chair of Water Monitoring and Air Quality

## Water & Air



The first photo is of the scientists and interns from AZDEQ and USFS and volunteers from FOF. The second picture is of us collecting water samples at Fossil Creek. The third picture is of Jim Manning replacing the display panel at the air filter station and the fourth is a view from Ike's Backbone, where the air station is located. That's the Verde River and the Mazatzal Wilderness.



## River Ranger Support

Well, fall is here and the trips begin. So far, we've been visiting Beasley Flats, Childs (an additional adventure), and Horseshoe Reservoir (in the valley). Several more trips are already planned.

Our team is always ready to assist in putting in and taking out the Forest Service River Rangers at whatever locations they are assigned. On these trips we learn from the River Rangers what condition the Verde River is in and possible solutions for existing problems.

These several photos show a recent put in at Beasley Flats. **Rhett Atkinson** and I assisted **Brian, Jesse, and Nate** on the beginning of a 9 day trip, ending at Horseshoe where Brian and Marilyn Painchaud helped in loading up all the equipment and returning to the Verde Ranger Station.

For any FOF members who would like to join us, please contact me at [riverrangers@fosedona.org](mailto:rivrangers@fosedona.org) or my cell (443) 324-1360. We will assist you in getting or renewing your government drivers license and possibly a trailer certificate. We are expecting the next Defensive Driver's Class to be held in December.

Hope everyone is staying healthy.

**Jerry Piepiora** - chairman



Trail Maintenance & Construction

How can it be December already? We don't know about you, but we think 2022 has flown by in a whirlwind. We are deeply grateful for all our incredible volunteers, and we know we leave them in good hands when we hand-off the TM&C torch. Yes – after 3+ years, we're passing on the tools and trail maintenance coordination to **Pat Quinn and Glenn Kingsbury**. Pat has already inherited all the tools and Glenn will be taking on the administrative, communication, and coordination duties in early January. Thank you to Pat and Glenn for stepping up and taking on these roles! We'll continue to be actively involved and look forward to working alongside you maintaining our awesome trails.

Since September, our crews have spent more than 400 hours removing fallen trees, repairing tread, clearing drains, building new trails, closing old trails, reenforcing trails with rock projects, brushing, lopping, and opening/clearing trails of rockslides. Earlier in the year, FOF approved a USFS request to fund buck & rail fencing and our crew installed it at the Huckaby Trailhead last month. TM&C also had a small group helping to erect a shelter at the Beaver Creek Work Center. See below for pictures of TM&C at work.

One area of TM&C that never gets recognition (OUR FAULT!!) and should is sign repair and installation. This is a never-ending task and usually handled

outside of our standard workdays. **Rich Spinelli** has been “the sign guy” for several years and is passing on the responsibility to **Rod Cashin**. We can't thank Rich and Rod enough for all that they do to ensure hikers and bikers don't get lost or return to the wrong trailhead/parking lot. Additionally, a small group of volunteers will be assuming a larger role in sign-making in the coming year. This job has largely fallen to **Jim Starkey**, a non-FOF volunteer who has dedicated thousands of hours to making signs for the Red Rock Ranger District. We thank Jim for all that he's done as he steps away and leaves us with big shoes to fill.

Currently, TM&C is working every other Friday morning on “regular” trail maintenance, other full days tackling some of the harder to reach wilderness areas, various scattered mornings installing kiosks, and participating in the Community Volunteer Trail Workdays.

It has been our privilege and honor to work with the amazing volunteers of Trail Maintenance & Construction. We've had a great experience being volunteer leaders and we thank you for always making us look so good! See you on the trails.

**-Melissa Pontikes and Mike Boyd**



Rich Spinelli - Sign Making

# Trail Maintenance & Construction



TM&C crew and USFS at Yavapai Vista



Buck & rail fencing at Huckaby Trailhead



New shelter at Beaver Creek



Dividing and conquering in Thunder Mountain area



# Rock Stars

## Volunteer of the Year



**Pat Quinn**

For jumping in during unprecedented times by volunteering over 600 hours and being a true Trail Ambassador.

## New Volunteer of the Year



**Cynthia Belowski**

For jumping in with both feet and hitting the ground running during unprecedented times and for giving so many hours volunteering in a variety of activities.

## Heart of the Friends



**Dale Evans**

For having a heart and taking the time to educate those who venture out onto our trails.

### ***Distinguished Volunteer - Rhett Atkinson***

For many years you have consistently given your time and energy to the Friends of the Forest in many ways.

### ***President's Award - Melissa Pontikes***

For being a strong leader and major contributor of the Friends of the Forest.

### ***Special Project Award - Jean Ober***

For pulling together all that FOF has done and continues to do in our Branching Out Newsletter.

### ***Special Recognition - Joe Pokorski***

For looking after the financial well-being of the Friends of the Forest.

# Special Recognition

## Wildlife/Fish/Rare Plants



Sharon Evans  
Not Available - Diane Greenhouse,  
Consuelo Marshall, Rob Gibbs, Alan  
Glickstein

## Trail Patrol



David Terrell, Marjorie Terrell, Bob Marriott  
Not Available - Mike Ober, Jean Ober, Bob  
Powers, Catherine Powers, Bernadette  
Marriott

## Water Monitor & Air Quality



Pat Quinn, Jerry Checchia, Jessica  
Baldischwiler  
Not available - Sally Gebler, Brian  
Painchaud, Luisa Galindo, Chuck Armstrong

## Trail Maintenance/Construction



Bill Logan, Rod Cashin, Jerry Checchia, Jim  
Manning, Pat Quinn, Rich Spinelli, Ernie  
DiMillo  
Not Available - Kurt Starbuck, Sam Serrill,  
Wayne Schwetje, Jeff Faust, Tim Fogarty,  
Bob Wych, Jim White, Bob Bare, Ken Stank,  
Tana Bourdage-Allman, Clay Dunsmore

# Special Recognition

## River Rangers



Mike Vitek, Frank Wirkus, Bob Beltz Not available - Dave Kennedy, Les Heffner, Warren Holm

## Graffiti Team



Pat Quinn, Margie Terrell, Adrienne Pichette, Jerry Piepiora, David Terrell Not available - Christine Nunez & Josie, Mike Ober, Jean Ober, Bob Haizmann, Beatrice Hanks

## Interpretive and Education



Bob Beltz Not Available - Kevin Harding, Barry Wallis

## Docents



Peter Belowski, Cynthia Belowski, Bob Beltz Not available - Bob Marriott, Bernadette Marriott, John Losse, Wayne Swart

## Photo Documentation



Ed Hodges Not Available - Jon Petrescu, David Irvine, Rob Elliot

## Visitor Information Service

Rhett Atkinson, Stephanie Klatt, Harry Strong

# Volunteer Picnic

Forest Service Cooks

Dutch Oven Style

Lunch



## Mark Your Calendar 2023 Board Meetings In person and Zoom

March 1, 2023 @ 9 AM

May 3, 2023 @ 9 AM

September 6, 2023 @ 9 AM

November to be determined

December 6, 2023 @ 9 AM