



## From the President

As I enter my first year as President of Friends of the Forest, I notice that Sedona has changed as a result of going through the year of 2020. Fortunately, this group of friends that shares their Red Rock fever has not changed. This group of friends has a pure love of nature with a strong desire to preserve its beauty and cultural history.

Our landscape is like none other, that's why we choose to be here. In 2020 we had an onslaught of new visitors trying to escape their isolation and frustrations. Many, many people came in response to social media. They came to places we all know well to be tourist attractions, but they also came to places we never expected them to have an impact on. I'm not even going to discuss the traffic and parking issues...yikes!

The changes around us require us to navigate through new and increasingly complex Job Hazard Analyses (JHAs) and work group shut-downs. I have to hand it to our members, kudos to you! We've been told "no group activities." Unless you go as an individual or a cohabitating couple, your work has to stop. Well, it's hard to contain this community of friends. Work has and is still getting done. We are preserving and enhancing our natural and cultural resources on the Red Rock District. We are cleaning up graffiti in enormous amounts and in places we hadn't gone to before. We are protecting wildlife and their habitats. We are working in groups on zoom. We are doing computer-based activities. We are out in the quieter areas of the forest, away from the tourists and monitoring, reporting, and cleaning up after less-respectful passers-by.

Thank you, members, for your continued participation and enthusiasm in our organization. I couldn't be prouder to be in my current role, you make it easy.

I want to thank the Officers for taking on their roles. **Bev Jackson, Vice President; Craig Swanson, Secretary; Joe Pokorski, Treasurer; Tom Cloonan, Assistant Treasurer.**

Let's thank all of our Board members for their services. Special thanks to retiring board member **Marilyn Painchaud** who is still very active on the Wildlife/Fish/Rare Plants as well as the webmaster.

In appreciation of our committee chairs, I would like to point out some team accomplishments when we really can't get out in teams. I will point out that some teams just can't get out and that's just the way it is. Unprecedented times. This will not last forever, so be ready to jump back in when the time arrives:

### Wildlife/Fish/Rare Plants

In 2020, **Janie** had our individuals and cohabitating couples working on several projects. Here are some of them:

- Adopt a Plot at the Visitor Center (should be starting up soon)
- Agaves – monitoring areas looking for ancient agaves
- Arundo Wasp – (starting up soon) looking for signs of wasps released to eradicate giant Arundo Donax invasive reeds.
- Exclosure & Enclosure Monitoring
- Lichen research
- Peregrine and Bat Monitoring

## In this issue

Page 1 - 2

Presidents Letter

Page 2

Trail Maintenance

Page 3

Tech Team

Wildlife Projects

Page 4

Statistical Summary

Page 5

Cultural Resources

Page 6

Membership

Page 7

Interpretive Programs

Page 8-9

Graffiti Removal

Page 10

In Memoriam

**Jean Ober**

**Branching Out Editor**

**newsletter@fosedona.org**

## Graffiti

**Jerry Piepiora** (Jerry the Elder = JTE) and **Jerry Chechia** (Jerry the Younger = JTY) have had their hands full. How do you get a team out to remove paint from boulders when there's a pandemic? Well, you make it happen; safely and carefully orchestrated. JTE came up with a scheme... er, a plan...he scheduled individuals or cohabitating couples in one-hour intervals. First up used the elephant snot and smeared it all over the boulders down by the creek. They left and the next team (individual or cohabitating couple) started scrubbing with the wire brushes. They left and the next team came in and power-washed the boulders. The ingenuity was genius. No one shared any equipment, they all had PPE, and they all followed the regulations to work during this pandemic. Wahoo!

## Trail Patrol

I can't wait until we can get back to having group Trail Patrols. That was how I was first introduced into FOF. **Jon** handed me my badge and patch. **Terri** showed me how to use the reporting app. I learned new trails and had felt that I was a part of a team. I hope that new members will be patient and when we open up our Trail Patrols to groups again, they will join in and learn from experienced leaders.

## Trail Maintenance & Constructions

Man, I miss going on this group! We were whiskers away from getting our Sawyer certifications. We just can't take the risk of such a large group going out and doing all the work that we do. Patience Mike and Melissa. Soon, that's all I can say.

## Visitor Information Services

**Bea** and her team are quietly behind the scenes working on videos. More to be revealed at a later date.

## Cultural Resources & Protection

**Spence** has been working with the Site Photography Team on an interesting project. He's got me drawing lines on the computer. He'll have to explain all the intricacies of his project because they are well above my head. Just know that he has been working a ton of hours with his team and east coast scholars.

In conclusion, I would like to make note that we lost a special volunteer in January of 2021, **Al Gilson**. He worked on several wildlife projects, installed the front entrance sign at the Ranger Station, installed vent covers on toilets across Red Rock Ranger District, and renovated the Apache Maid Cabin to name but a few of the outstanding contributions he made as a Friend of the Forest volunteer.

Thank you ALL for your much appreciated contributions in difficult times.

**Annie Glickstein**, President

## Trail Maintenance & Construction

Greetings and Happy 2021. Unfortunately, Trail Maintenance & Construction activity was shut down in the beginning of December and we remain on hiatus. Luckily for all of the residents and visitors, the USFS has had a large number of seasonal trail workers and they have been able to do some basic maintenance, tree removal, etc. To say that the TM&C'ers are anxious to get back to trail work is an understatement! Almost weekly, we get a message from one of our incredible volunteers asking if they can address an issue they have seen while out on the trails. Much to their chagrin – our answer is a consistent "Sorry but no. No volunteer trail work of any kind until further notice." Fingers crossed that we will be able to resume Friday morning trail maintenance sooner than later. Until then, we wish all of the FOF Family a safe and healthy Spring.

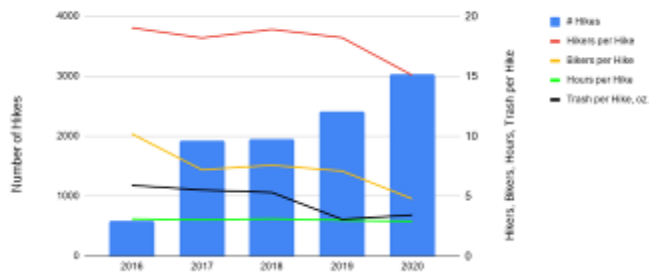
**Melissa Pontikes and Mike Boyd**



## Technology Team

We've been isolating but that doesn't mean we're not volunteering. This becomes obvious when we look at long term reporting trends.

### FoF Sedona Trail Patrol Reporting

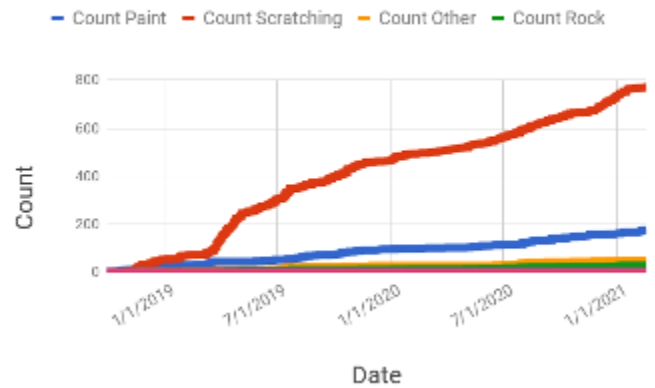


This graph shows the number of hikes reported by Trail Patrol since the system was put in place in September 2016. The calendar year of 2020 was a banner year - we exceeded 3000 hikes. Interestingly, the lines show that the average number of hikers and bikers encountered per patrol report dropped compared to previous years. This probably indicates that we often avoided the busiest trails.

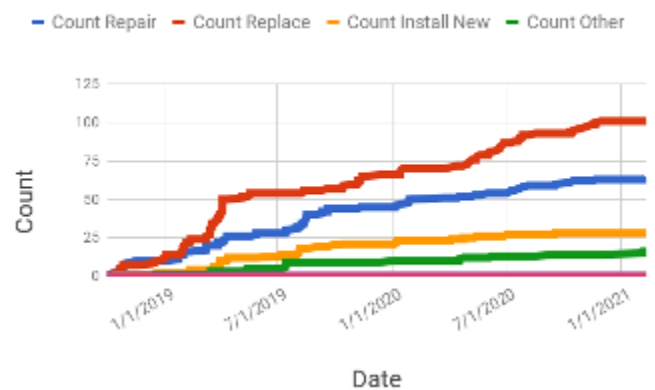
The next two graphs show the number of signage and graffiti repairs completed since 2019. Again, we see in 2020 was a highly productive year. We were able to continue maintenance work while working independently in both these areas. These teams use phone apps to find the location of reports, plan their repairs, and document completed work.

**Bob Haizmann**

### Graffiti Repairs Over Time



### Signage Repairs Over Time



## Wildlife Projects

FOF Volunteer Dave Kennedy is shown putting the finishing touches recently on the relocation of an American kestrel nest box at Rogers Tank at Duff Flats north of Forest Road 258. The box was relocated from a nearby site to this one where it is hoped the trees will provide some cooling shade. Erection and monitoring of the nest boxes are one of the host of wildlife/fish/rare plants projects coordinated by **Janie Agyagos**, Red Rock Ranger District Wildlife Biologist. They are also part of a research and conservation program called the American Kestrel Project (AKP). The Arizona Game and Fish Department has taken the lead in establishing a network of partners to build, place and monitor the boxes throughout the state. The goal is to provide breeding habitat for America's smallest and most colorful falcon, which is suffering a decline. Ferocious hunters, kestrels are found from Alaska to South America. They dine on insects, small rodents, reptiles and other birds. Volunteers visit the boxes during breeding season to record the presence of eggs and young and again in winter to clean them and replace bedding. Information obtained is uploaded to the AKP website.

**Dave Kennedy**



Photo by **Judy Kennedy**

## Volunteer Hours

Unfortunately, our volunteers continue to be severely limited by the pandemic, with several of our committees unable to operate at all. Those that are individual/couples in nature have been able to be out in the field, allowing at least some volunteer work to continue.

I think we're all really looking forward to a re-opening of all our activities once it is safe to do so.

Here is the recap of the hours by committee for FY21 thru January, compared to the same period last year:

Peg Kern

Committee	FY21 Thru Jan	FY20 Thru Jan	Change in Hours	Percent Change	FY20 % of Total
Air Quality	0	175	-175	-100.0%	0.0%
Cultural Resources	1,411	3,385	-1,973	-58.3%	18.1%
Graffiti Removal	619	590	+29	+4.9%	7.9%
Interpretive Pgm	22	172	-150	-87.2%	0.3%
River Rangers	53	181	-128	-70.7%	0.7%
Special Projects	0	151	-151	-100.0%	0.0%
Trail Maint&Const	539	1,122	-583	-52.0%	6.9%
Trail Patrol	4,217	4,132	+86	+2.1%	54.1%
VIS	0	1,440	-1,440	-100.0%	0.0%
Water Sampling	0	0	0	0%	0.0%
Wildlife/Fish/Plants	577	1,029	-453	-44.0%	7.4%
Admin/Meetings	357	796	-439	-55.2%	4.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,794</b>	<b>13,171</b>	<b>-5,377</b>	<b>-40.8%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

FRIENDS OF THE FOREST SEDONA BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND MEMBERS VIRTUAL MEETING

March 3, 2021 @ 9:00 AM

Here is the login for the [Zoom Board Meeting](#)

<https://zoom.us/j/91880766888?pwd=YVcyVEkvY1R4dkNudHhBSUFZSzdKUT09>

You can join by phone only by dialing 1-602-753-0140. When prompted for a Meeting ID, enter 918 8076 6888. The password is 032021.



Nearly all activities for the Cultural Resources Committee continue to be shut down due to the pandemic. A few tasks that are either solitary in nature or involve just a spouse and/or hiking dog have managed to continue.

### Awards and Accolades

The Cultural Site Photo Documentation team is the recipient of the **2020 Cultural Heritage Award** given by Keep Sedona Beautiful. Congratulations to the team for on this well-deserved award!! (More details elsewhere in the newsletter)

Four FoF members (**Spence Gustav, Scott Newth, Jerry Walters, and Rick Zabor**) were among 30 Coconino National Forest volunteers that have been “recognized by the Chief of the Forest Service for their dedication to archaeology projects throughout the forest” – “**Working Together Preserving the Public Lands Legacy**”. Each recipient volunteered over 1,000 hours over multiple years to archaeology projects that directly support of the Forest Supervisor’s Office (i.e., Coconino Forest Archaeologist). Each recipient received a certificate personally signed by the Chief of the Forest Service.

### Site Recording Project

Still on hold.

### Cultural Site Photo Documentation Project

The only ongoing work has been the Paleo Scratch Study. Work is underway to produce a preliminary status report for publication in June for the ARARA (American Rock Art Recording Assoc.) Computer based help is still needed in support of this effort. Spence will provide training via Zoom; the best part is that he does not have a camera on his end. If you are interested in helping with this project, or would like more information, please contact **Spence Gustav** at [spencehg@yahoo.com](mailto:spencehg@yahoo.com).

### Docent Program

Still on hold. Training will not resume until both V-Bar-V and Palatki are reopened. Forest Service crews have been busy at Palatki cleaning up downed trees and limbs from the recent heavy snow fall.

We are always in need of new docents, particularly if you spend all or part of the summer months in the Verde Valley! With the sites being shut down we cannot do training for new docents. I am still taking names of those who are interested so that I can notify them when training becomes available.

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 ([docents@fosedona.org](mailto:docents@fosedona.org)) for more information.

**Jerry Walters** 284-1339

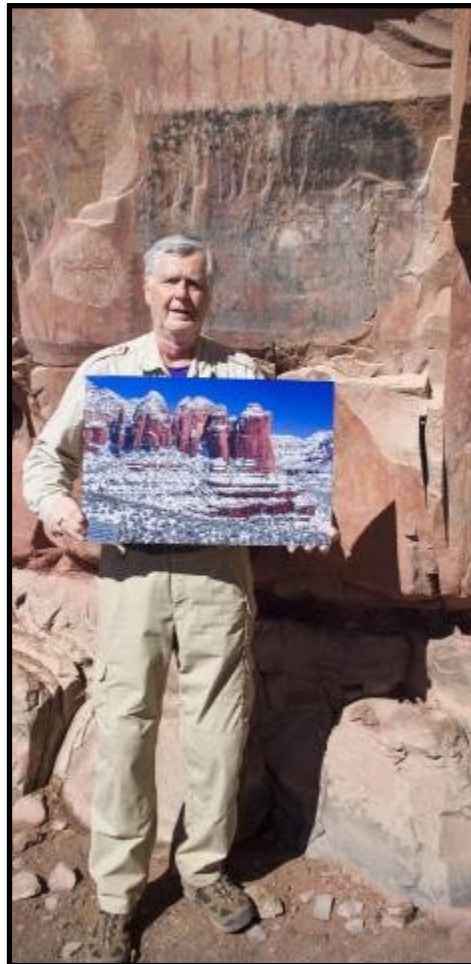
### KSB award to Cultural Resources Photo Team

As many of you are aware, KSB named the FOF Site Photo Documentation Team as their 2020 Cultural Heritage Award winners. As they cannot have their traditional live presentation (lunch included - so they really annoyed me on this one) they us the award, a beautiful 16 x 24 inch print on aluminum with a small award plaque.

We got this photo of **Jon Petrescu** with the award. We did have him take off his mask so you would know who to blame. Nobody was within 12 feet of him. It was a telephoto lens. The print and plaque are being passed on to the FS. They indicate they will find some places to display this and other awards and potentially rotate them around the Ranger Station, Heritage Site Visitor Centers, VIS and elsewhere.

Congratulations and thanks to everyone who helped the group deserve and receive the award.

**Spence Gustav**



## THE GOOD NEWS!

Despite the pandemic and the curtailment of FOF activities, 69 new members joined our ranks in 2020. For the period between 11/15/20 and 2/20/21, we welcomed 3 Individual, 3 Life Individual, 4 Family and 4 Life Family members. A hearty welcome to all! If you are a new member in the past year, you will be happy to know that our Annual New Member Welcome Event will still be held this year, only this time it will be virtual. Some of you have already signed up for committees and some are waiting until your committees of interest are active again. We have not forgotten you!

Please join us on **Wednesday March 10th at 2PM** via ZOOM where you will hear and see each committee chairman outline their committee functions, their need for volunteers, and their plans for 2021 once activities resume. We hope they will spark your interest in getting involved. Look for our upcoming letter and flyer with a link to the ZOOM event. We are always excited to see new members who invariably bring new skills, knowledge, and enthusiasm to the organization. Log in to our virtual meeting and discover how partnership between the Friends and the Red Rock Ranger district enhances our efforts to preserve and protect the land.

Once this pandemic is over, there will be many projects that require attention, and your participation will be most welcome! If you have joined the Friends since our last meeting in February 2020 you will soon receive an email invitation and link to our Annual New Member Event via ZOOM. We look forward to seeing and hearing from you.

**THE BAD NEWS** Our total membership currently stands at 618, but that may change drastically since there are still over 80 members who have not renewed their membership for 2021. Please do not withdraw your support at this critical time. We have so much more work to do when this pandemic is over. We need you help now more than ever!

To renew: go to [www.friendsoftheforestsedona.org](http://www.friendsoftheforestsedona.org), select "Join Us," and follow the steps to renew using PayPal or a Credit Card.

Alternately, you can renew by mail. Just fill out and mail the form below with your dues.

**Noreen Lisowski**

Friends of the Forest Membership Dues, January 1 thru December 31, 2021

Name (s) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Category: ( ☐ ) Friend \$25 ( ☐ ) Family \$35 ( ☐ ) Lifetime Friend \$150 ( ☐ ) Lifetime Family \$250

Hello "Friends" . . .

Since mid-March, all Interpretive & Educational Programs (IEP) activities have been cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic and we have only been able to do some virtual activities. Thank goodness for internet, facetime and Zoom meetings. Life has definitely changed for everyone this past year.

We are in the beginning stages of creating some **short-form informational videos** to share with the public on YouTube. I am amazed in, how many professional photographers/videographers we have in our FoF organization. Eight other FoF volunteers were able to do some Zoom training on Audience Centered Interpretation, to help us create videos, which will elicit participation and contribution from the audience and try to get their thought process going about our precious forest. Hopefully create positive behavior, while recreating in the RRRD (or any natural setting). For more information, please contact me at [interpretive@fosedona.org](mailto:interpretive@fosedona.org)

I would also like to repeat a newsletter article by our previous FoF President (see below). My husband and I order from [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com) and I know a lot of you do the same. Did you know, your order could create income (donation) for FoF, without you doing anything special. Just put the items in your cart as normal, but when ready to order, use [smile.amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com). Your account and cart is the same, it just makes that purchase eligible for a (small) donation by Amazon to FoF . . . FREE MONEY!!

**"Donate by shopping Amazon Smile** While Friends of the Forest does not endorse any web-based shopping portal, if you already use Amazon, they offer a simple and automatic way for you to support FOF every time you make a purchase. When you shop at [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com), you are in fact shopping on Amazon and it is exactly the same price as shopping on Amazon.com. The Amazon Smile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price on eligible products to Friends of the Forest. **FIRST** go to [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com). On the Amazon Smile web page, you will see something like the following: In the box under the label "Or pick your own charitable organization", simply type Friends of the Forest Sedona. Click on Search, and you will then see something like the following: Click the Select box. From now on, [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com) will remember your selection, and FOF will get a donation from every eligible purchase you make. Now, you just need to always go to [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com) instead of Amazon.com when placing your order."

I know most people are tired of COVID-19, but please keep yourself and your family and friends safe. I have heard of quite a few FoF volunteers receiving their first (if not their 2<sup>nd</sup>) vaccine. Let us keep vigilant, follow CDC guidelines until vaccines are available for everyone.

"May the Forest be with you!"

**Bea Logan**  
IEP chair

**Check out all of the great interpretive  
programs on our website:  
[friendsoftheforestsedona.org](https://friendsoftheforestsedona.org)**

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.



## Graffiti Removal

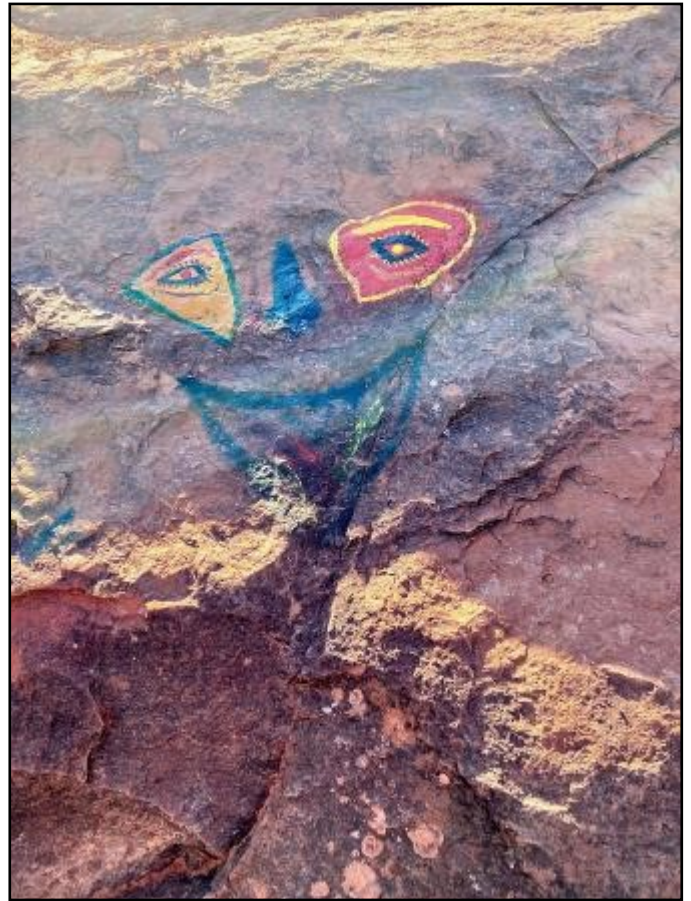
One might make the argument that as the cases of COVID increase, the tourists and hikers on the trails would decrease - and you would be wrong! Just the opposite seems to be the case. Sedona and the Coconino National Forest area continues to attract tourists in greater numbers than ever. Certainly, no surprise to those of us hiking any of the trails.

In an attempt to keep up with the ever-increasing new graffiti, we keep making procedural changes to the Graffiti Removal Team. Because of COVID, we are still limited in going out as married couples or individuals, among the other restrictions. Fortunately, there have been no major paint sites, which would require a team effort. Scratchings on the rocks (for those who wish to become (in)famous - at least until we get there) still, by far, are taking up most of our time, 150-200 hours per month.

Because we have also seen an increase in spray paint and stickers on signs, steel containers, utility boxes, trail head markers, pipes, restroom walls, etc., we recently purchased more "Orange Safety Spray #2" and smaller dispenser bottles with spray nozzles. With some additional training, we have given these added tools to some of our more experienced team members and are getting to these locations much quicker.

Attached is an example of where the "Orange" has helped. Thanks to Les & Barb Heffner.

Of course, Elephant Snot continues to be our main weapon against paint on rocks. Thanks again, Les & Barb.







Because our #1 priority continues to be the safety and wellbeing of our team we have, for the most part, avoided the most popular tourist sites - Cathedral Rock, Bell Rock, and, of course, Devil's Bridge, which ends up being an open invitation for copycats! If one of our team wishes to work these trails, it is normally early in the morning and we make every attempt to stay separated from hikers who, of course, are always wearing masks and practicing social distancing. What our group misses most are the social and fun aspects of our outings. We like to think we do a little work but have a really fun time doing it.

We have now added tree carving inspection to our list of observations. We cannot repair, but the Forest Service is interested in how much damage is being done.

Lastly, **Gary Cooper and his wife, Kathy**, designed a very attractive window sticker for our vehicles. It is always our hope that more social awareness will help reduce the damage to our Forest



One final photo — when graffiti was more of a “party” outing - We’ll get back to that again... soon??



Our team keeps getting stronger and more experienced — and now are used to working alone.

Keep the reports coming!

**Jerry Piepiora**, Chairman

Photos from **J. Piepiora**



## IN MEMORIAM AL GILSON - January 2021

A working man, what better way to remember Al than in photos of him and his projects. A mentor and teacher to many, Al gave freely of his time and talents to the FRIENDS and Coconino National Forest.



March 2013 Allen's Bend Trail - **Gene Rector, Mike Haboush** and **Al** tree removal  
(Above and Left photos **J. Manning**)



Photos 1 - 3 from **Janie Agyagos**

- 1) Vent cover project for vault toilets
- 2) Al and Glen Benning after installing Red Rock Ranger District Front Entrance sign
- 3) Apache Maid cabin rehab
- 4) Crescent Moon flagstone walkway.
- 5) Al receiving the President's Award from Jennifer Young October 2016



Photos 4 - 5 from **J. Ober**