



March 2023

Branching Out

Sedona Friends of the Forest

From the President

Greetings amazing volunteers,

Most of you already know me but just in case my name is Jerry Checchia and I'm proud to be an FOF member. I joined the Friends back in 2016 and have met so many wonderful people since then.

I know we have a wide variety of committees and groups to keep our volunteers engaged but since being elected President I have a whole new respect for all the committee chairs, board members & officers. So much work and planning goes on behind the scenes and we couldn't do it without YOU! I am also in awe of the response we get from our members when we are asked to do any special projects from the Forest Service. Take the Cathedral Rock Closure for instance, we were asked to help inform and redirect visitors at the trail head while this very popular trail is under major reconstruction. The response at such short notice was unbelievable.

Whether you enjoy talking to visitors, moving rocks or listening to frogs out in the wilderness the FOF has something for you.

Thank you all for your time and hard work to make the Friends what it is and I look forward to serving as President as we approach our 30 year anniversary in Spring of 2024.

Stay safe everyone,
Jerry Checchia
President
Sedona Friends of the Forest

Passing the Gavel



Board Meeting Dates

2023

March 1 @ 9 AM

May 3 @ 9 AM

September 6 @ 9 AM

December 6 @ 9 AM

Wildlife, Fish, Rare Plants

Holy cow, that's a lot of plants!

Janie, our Forest Service (FS) Wildlife Biologist, had received notice from a winter resident that there was a large outcrop of sorghum (aka "shattercane") on the Peccary Trail and asked if I had any volunteers that could scope it out. Well of course I do. I only had to ask three volunteers and all three quickly figured out when they could meet up, worked it out and took care of it. What they found was a **lot** of plants indeed...**675** plants (20% with seeds). They gave a professional and detailed report with waypoints and photos. Adrienne Pichette, Carol Does, and Dale Smrz have all been involved with the sorghum plants and how to remove them properly, so I am grateful that they pulled this off. It was a lot of work in the post-snow cold, muddy weather. If you have any interest in learning about the plant and how to remove it, I am certain they can help better than I can. Thank you!



Barbed wire artwork can save a pronghorn's life!

We have several barbed (or is it barb???) wire fence workdays scheduled over the next few months. If you would like to participate, please sign up. We are removing the bottom barbed wire and replacing it with smooth wire. This allows the pronghorns to slide under without getting hurt. Also, look at the great things you can create with the old wire. Here is the [LINK TO SIGN UP](#)

Thursday – February 23

Wednesday – March 22

Thursday – April 20

Tuesday – May 23



*Annie Glickstein
Yes, that's me - a real tomboy*

Wildlife, Fish, Rare Plants

How about a frog chorus line?

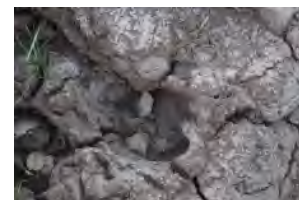
Well, have I got a chorus for you – we are going to be monitoring the Pacific Chorus Frog.

During AZ toad surveys in 2018 Pam Milavec detected non-native Pacific Chorus frogs at Red Rock Crossing. We subsequently found them as high up on Oak Creek as Los Abridados in 2018 and one of our “phantom volunteers” heard them at Red Rock State Park in 2019. We have some volunteers now who are willing to listen at nighttime call points along Oak Creek from below Red Rock State Park, upstream to Midgley Bridge from March 1 until after they stop calling in late spring/early summer. Janie is hoping for weekly surveys and the surveys have to occur after it’s fully dark. Janie already put on a training in February for those interested. Their calls are very easy to distinguish from any other species and it’s an aural survey only – no need to muck around in the water or to hike in the dark. If you would like to get involved in this project, there is still room. Just let me know.



Seize the Moo-ment!

Yes, you can help with monitoring for Livestock in Riparian areas. There is quarterly (!) monitoring required as a result of a settlement agreement from a lawsuit involving livestock grazing along the Verde River and associated riparian habitat. We need volunteers to visit specific riparian stretches to look for and document livestock access into and along the Verde riparian. You will note your observations on provided field forms. Field forms and pictures are then returned to me. Thanks to those who have helped out in the past. You'll find the various reaches that need monitoring in this [SIGNUP LINK](#). You can pop in and out via roads, trails, and accessible cross country access points or even use binoculars to glass down into riparian looking for signs of livestock.



*This is one sign of livestock.
A cow print in the dried mud.*

Wildlife / Fish / Rare Plants

Annie Glickstein, Chairperson

wildlife@fosedona.org



Red Rock Pass Request Process

Friends of the Forest Members with a minimum 16 volunteer hours

The process for FOF volunteers requesting a Courtesy Red Rock Pass is outlined below to give the Forest Service personnel (Rochelle) the opportunity to fulfill the requests in a streamlined manner.

If you already have the America the Beautiful Pass, then you do **not** need a Red Rock Pass.

Requirements	16 FOF volunteer hours for the fiscal year October 1 st through September 30 th
How to Request a Red Rock Pass	If your current pass will expire at the end of the month, [or you never had one] then send an email to annie.glickstein@fosedona.org [see sample below]
What do I need to do when requesting a pass	Verify your mailing address and phone number in NEON (the FOF website that you log into to sign JHAs – choose “Update My Information” to view what is on file for you.
What will happen next	All hours will be verified and a request for the current month’s Red Rock Passes will be sent to the Forest Service on the 14 th of each month.
What if you never had a Pass	Same procedure as if your pass was expiring.
What if I request a Pass after the 14th of the month	Your request will be processed the following month along with that batch of requests
What do I HAVE to do when I receive my Red Rock Pass	You MUST sign and return the acknowledgment form that will be mailed to you along with the Red Rock Pass.
What if I requested the pass and I did not get it by the end of the month?	Email annie.glickstein@fosedona.org and there will be a review to track it down. It has happened that passes were mailed to incorrect addresses, they were received a little late due to postal delays, or just got missed. We’ll figure it out.

Here is a sample request:

Subject: Red Rock Pass Request

My Red Rock Pass is expiring this month, I have more than 16 hours and I checked my address and email in NEON. I promise to sign and return the acknowledgment form when I receive the Pass in the mail.

***Thank you,
Earl E. Bird
555-123-4567***

Interpretive Programs

Hello FRIENDS!

Enjoying the weather? We have been scheduling (bi) monthly hikes and walks since October 2022 and only had to cancel one Geology hike the end of December due to the weather. The public interest is good. If any of you are interested in joining any of these hikes/walks, please check our FOF website. You can find more information on at www.FriendsoftheForestSedona.org and click on EVENTS at the top of the page.

Many thanks to Kevin Harding (bird watching walks) and Barry Mallis (geology hikes) for leading these events. **See photos.**

In April we hope to offer our wildflower walks again. Looking forward to those since the weather will be warmer. It ALWAYS amazes me, how many different flowers like to bloom in our high-desert area.

We are now also able to offer indoor activities again. If anyone reading this article would like to volunteer their knowledge and offer any walks/hikes or a classroom meeting, please contact me. We are always looking for more people who have special expertise, that they would like to share with the public, either as an indoor presentation (talks / demonstrations) or as a guided walk/hike. I know we have many photographers in our membership and would love to offer either an indoors or outdoors class, to share information with the public on how to create better photos with their cell phone or camera. If that is you, let me know. Really anyone, who wants to share information about our Red Rock Ranger District, can contact me.

We are looking for great speakers, who present classroom talks, do demonstrations, or lead guided walks throughout the year (or just once or twice) for both adults and/or youth to learn about the heritage, geology, plants and animals of this very special place, the Red Rock District (or any other subject supporting this natural beauty). Indoor classes will be held at the Visitors Center (either in the meeting room or outside on the patio). Please contact me, if interested, and I will discuss it with the Forest Service. They will have the ultimate say-so. www.interpretive@friendsoftheforest.org

Osprey in Flight



Birding Walks with Kevin Harding



Male Redhead Duck



Geology Hikes with Barry Mallis



Interpretive Programs

New Committee: Shout out to **Dale Smrtz** and his new FOF Trailhead Beautification Committee. I joined his committee and enjoy making the trailheads (parking lots) look better and safer for our visitors and locals. Don't be surprised when visitors approach you for information. Last Thursday we were at Bell Rock Plaza TH and were approached numerous times. Luckily I also volunteer at the Visitors Center. LOL. E-mail Dale for more info:

www.dale.smrz@fosedona.org.

"May the Forest be with you".

Bea Logan

Chair, Interpretive & Educational Programs Committee

interpretive@fosedona.org

Forest Service News

Janie Agyagos, District Wildlife Staff, Coconino National Forest, Red Rock Ranger District recognized for leadership of the district's wildlife, fish, and rare plant (WFRP) volunteer program.

Janie has been dedicated to facilitating an environment that integrates volunteer service as a core component of the WFRP program. For over 27 years, she has developed deep relationships throughout the surrounding communities based on principles of shared stewardship, service, interdependence, and safety. Janie has strategically grown and retained a committed volunteer community focused on priority, complex work. At best count, over 50 volunteers contributed service and expertise to the District's WFRP program in fiscal year (FY) 2021. Janie's determination, deep passion for her work, engagement within the community, and empowerment of a diverse volunteer community has leveraged over 3,000 hours in FY 2021, despite the ongoing pandemic.

Janie has been leading volunteers to inventory domesticated agaves in Arizona's Verde Valley.

Agaves are important to indigenous communities for traditional uses. *Agave phillipsiana* is a rare species endemic to Arizona. Rare species are important barometers for determining the health of ecosystems in a region, as well as a reflection of the diversity of organisms in an area. A total of 11 polygons have been completed and 20 polygons are still being surveyed. Suspect agaves are reported to volunteer Alan Glickstein for organization and then sent to Wendy Hodgson, herbarium curator and research botanist at the Desert Botanical Garden in Phoenix, AZ for confirmation.

Even more inspiring, Janie worked with Friends of the Forest (FoF) volunteer Garry Neil and curator of Arizona State University's lichen herbarium, Dr. Frank Bungartz, to collect and identify 737 collections. Through the collection, 256 species have been identified, 108 of which are new species on the district, and three of which are new to Arizona! Lichen survey work alone contributed to nearly 1,100 volunteer hours and provided new conservation education opportunities for Forest visitors and schools.

Forest Service News

Additional achievements through Janie's leadership and volunteers supporting her program in FY 2021 include:

- Agave inventory
- Lichen surveys
- Barn owl and kestrel box construction/ installation
- Kestrel nest box monitoring and chick banding
- Peregrine monitoring
- eBird data entry
- Bat roost inventory, monitoring and White Nose Syndrome swabbing
- Arundo wasp monitoring
- Monarch habitat at Crescent Moon Ranch
- Community garden
- Pollinator garden and Visitor Center garden maintenance
- Updated butterfly list
- Snail surveys
- Exclosure monitoring and repairs
- Fence removal
- Welding to repair frog habitat fencing and horse corrals

- Wildlife cameras maintenance and photo management
- Interpretive kiosk inventory and development of riparian sign content
- Invasive weeds inventory, monitoring and manual treatment

This list of accomplishments represents a staggering amount of work. More importantly, it illustrates the deep relationships based on shared values that Janie has sown and grown. The achievements as outlined above align with multiple USDA and Forest Service strategic goals and priorities including; ensuring programs are delivered effectively with a focus on customer service, deliver benefits to the public, apply knowledge globally, and promoting shared stewardship. Her demonstrated leadership and unwavering commitment to relationships has empowered countless volunteers.

Annie Glickstein



Janie Agyagos

Graffiti Removal Team

First a big thank you to Jerry Checchia for his thoughtful leadership as chair of the Graffiti Removal Team. He will be a hard act to follow. He's moved on to be our President. No surprises there. Also a big shout out for all the members of the team. We now have 106 active members; often working independently to report and remediate graffiti.

Everyone should be using our Graffiti App to report graffiti with their cell phones. It's easy to use. And the sooner reported, then the sooner removed. This helps minimize 'copycat' graffiti, shown in the accompanying photo. Ugly copycat sticker graffiti. The number of stickers on this sign grew over time! My spouse Marsha asked me "Who hikes with stickers?" Answer: Apparently lots of guests coming to Sedona to hike the trails bring stickers. Go figure.

Contact me and I can link you up with Bob Haizmann to get you the app. And when using the app please remember to edit the status to 'In Progress' for any reports you will remediate. This way everyone knows that the report is being worked on, and not to go to that site. Our target is to complete 'In Progress' reports within 24 to 48 hours.

The number of reports is still low compared to historical levels. Can only be a reflection of less visitors to Sedona. A brief respite until Spring Break! Everyone be careful out there and enjoy our forest.

Jim White



Sticker graffiti



Post Clean-up

Trail Patrol

Neither wind nor rain nor snow... Trail Patrol has been active this winter with five group hikes completed since November, four more on the books for February and March and four more planned for March and April – including educational hikes on geology and birds. Thank-you to Bob and Carol Dore for leading two Trail Patrol hikes this year and to Barry Mallis and Kevin Harding for leading our Geo/Bird hikes.

Since October we have added seventeen new members. November through January saw us doing 1,002 hikes and recording 2,706 hours. Along with that, Trail Patrol members, as have other FoF committee members, have volunteered for a number of Cathedral Rock project slots.

Trail Patrol is also working with Melissa and Jorde Hayden (NAU grad student) in support of the Red Rock Ranger District “Trail Usage” Count in March and April. Both this project and the Cathedral Rock project are excellent introductions to Trail Patrol’s Preventative Search and Rescue (PSAR) efforts – aka Trail Ambassadors. Anyone interested in joining PSAR in 2023 is encouraged to sign up for one or more Cathedral Rock or Trail Usage slots to get a feel for the rewarding experience of sharing your knowledge and love of the Red Rocks with visiting hikers making their time on our trails enjoyable and safe.

Speaking of PSAR – that time of year is approaching. Mark Goshorn and his RRRD team members and Trail Patrol met last December to coordinate efforts. The RRRD

is going to provide us with two pop-up tents with Forest Service logo canopies as well as sandwich boards for our efforts at Bell Trail (“The Crack”) and Dry Creek Vista (“Devils Bridge”). Signage changes/additions have also been made at both sites. We have also been working with the City of Sedona regarding our PSAR efforts at Devils Bridge. The city welcomed our efforts and provided us space on their shuttle webpage to offer safety tips. They indicated they would also be offering water on shuttle buses in 2023 and as they institute new signage, offer us input/space as it is available. In the coming months we will again touch base with Sedona Police and Fire re our PSAR plans for 2023 as well as Verde Valley Search and Rescue. In April/May there will be Bell Trail and Chuckwagon/Mescal Trail hikes offered to PSAR members to give folks a chance to experience the trails (without the heat). PSAR training will also be scheduled for early May.

As always, the efforts of our Trail Patrol members are greatly appreciated. Anyone interested in joining Trail Patrol/PSAR, leading hikes, mentoring new TP or PSAR members, signing on as co-chair... will be SERIOUSLY considered. Awaiting your contact at dale.evans.dvm@earthlink.net

Dale Evans



Backbone Hike



PSAR

Membership

Our membership as of February 17, 2023 is 668. Since our last newsletter, 18 new members have joined Friends of the Forest: **Bart Bartlett, Jenise DeGraw, Karla Enzweiler, David Gorney, Brenda Graham, Scott Jones, Patricia Langan, Leslie Lundberg, Tim Murphy, Kila Hau, George Peck, Deirdre Peterson, Dan Rhodes, Cynthia Sansone, Rita Shovea, Duncan Smith, Martha Smith and Joshua Utter**

Our final renewal communication for 2023 memberships has been sent. If you're one of the 41 members who haven't yet renewed your membership for 2023, please consider doing so ASAP, as you won't be able to volunteer without doing so.

Craig Swanson

FOF Membership Data as of 02/18/2023 (using calendar years)				
		Annual	Life	Total
2023	New Members Added Since November 23, 2022	16	2	18
	Past Members not Renewing for 2023	41		
	Current Membership as of 02/17/2023	258	409	668
2022	New Members Added in 2022	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

I wish to thank all of our board members and committee chairs who turn in excellent articles and pictures for Branching Out.

Jean Ober, Editor

newsletter@fosedona.org

Cultural Resources

The mission of the Cultural Resources Committee is to preserve and protect the cultural sites in the Red Rock Ranger District - RRRD of the Coconino National Forest - CNF (and sometimes adjacent National Forests or Ranger Districts in CNF). A big part of preserving and protecting is to help educate visitors and frequent users of the forest by providing Docents at the managed cultural sites within RRRD (**Palatki**, **Honanki**, and **V-Bar-V**). Besides these three sites, there are many hundreds of un-managed sites in the district that are able to be discovered by hikers (or led there explicitly by social media). These smaller sites are no less valuable or important to archaeologists and the native peoples in Arizona who are descendants of the cultures who created and lived in these sites. Outright vandalism, graffiti, and theft of artifacts is an ever increasing problem. The three ongoing projects within the committee (**Docent Program**, **Cultural Site Photo Documentation Project**, and **Remote Site Photo Monitoring Project**) are all geared towards achieving our mission.

Cultural Site Photo Documentation Project

This is a multi-faceted project that does ongoing periodic photo documentation of the managed sites, initial/baseline photo documentation of un-managed sites, and photo documentation of graffiti and other vandalism at all sites.

In addition to the traditional single image photos (individual rock art elements or artifacts and broadside views of rooms or entire sites). The team has distinguished itself locally, nationally, and (I dare say) internationally with their work in **precision** high-resolution multi-image techniques utilizing a few hundred to thousands of photos that carefully mosaic the area in question and often times with lighting from different angles. Each photo is equal in scale to its adjacent photos and can be of an area of 10's of square feet to a few square inches! Very specialized (and sometimes custom) software is used to stitch the images together utilizing a high power (memory & CPU/GPU) computer workstation (Spence heats his house in the winter with it). The composite images can then be viewed and/or annotated utilizing additional specialized software. These projects fall into three main categories: **3D Photogrammetry**; **Dust Study**; and **Fine Incised Petroglyph Study**. All of which are serious leading/bleeding edge scientific endeavors!

3D Photogrammetry:

This technique is employed to document prehistoric and historic dwelling interiors and exteriors as well as detail and high-level views of rock art panels. Aside from the broader contextual documentation of a site (i.e. you can see where/how the pieces/elements relate to one another rather than juggling multiple photos and sketches to get the big picture) you can view things from a nearly unlimited set of angles, closer in, and as much or more detail than standing at the site in person. Aside from human intervention, all sites are subject to decay and failures from atmospheric and geological forces. Having the baseline images allows us to follow the progress of cracking or spalling rock faces in these sites. We have already had several significant unexpected failures at Palatki (water catchment) and V-Bar-V (calendar stone) that would be lost forever without the models that were created beforehand. Historic wooden structures are at more imminent risk of collapse. The 3-D models are hosted by the Sketchfab web site. There are currently over 2,200 models available for viewing by the general public as well as ~100 more that are Private for viewing only FS (other ranger districts) and National Park Service personnel who requested that we create them on their behalf. Our presence on this site has generated requests for help from other researchers in various disciplines on utilizing the Sketchfab software and/or processes and techniques used in acquiring photos. The two-way exchange has been beneficial to our team as well. Sketchfab even requested a BLOG entry giving a little history of FoF and the tools and techniques the team has been using to achieve such excellent results: - <https://sketchfab.com/blogs/community/sedona-friends-of-the-forest-digitize-history-in-coconino-national-forest/> (great PR for FoF and more detail for "inquiring minds")

Examples of Palatki models: - <https://sketchfab.com/FOFSedona/collections/286-palatki-watercatchment-16f40599acfa46d082a84047a7db7eaf>.

I've included this example as some of the models are of areas of interest for the Fine Incised Petroglyph Study. The Forest Service has links to the models for Palatki, V-Bar-V, and Honanki on its website and has been advertising them on Facebook in recent weeks.

A sub-project is an analysis of how lichens are impacting the petroglyphs at V-Bar-V at a more detailed level. This

project is just getting underway and has had several false starts the past several years due to COVID, start-up learning curve, and availability of Arizona State University partners.

Cross project synergy with other FoF teams:

This team also interfaces with the Graffiti Removal team to evaluate graffiti in cultural sites and identify specific site locations that receive graffiti on a too regular basis, but no remediation can be done without doing damage to the underlying pictographs or petroglyphs. Many of the projects could not be accomplished without the help of the TM&C crew to transport and setup scaffolding and ladders needed to facilitate the precise positioning of the cameras and their operators. A huge thanks to that team!! TM&C was also instrumental for constructing the “tower” that holds the weather station that was installed in the field in front of the office at Palatki. The weather station is part of yet another ongoing long term study to record and analyze temperature and humidity variations at various locations within the dwellings and rock art panels (where separate temperature and humidity recorders have been placed) to see how much they differ from the reference weather station in the field and each other. For those who are interested, the weather station is part of the Weather Underground network of personal weather stations (station ID: KAZSEDON119).

Dust Study:

Photos over time (months/years) of specialized and calibrated dust capture panels and carefully crafted sandstone tablets containing reproduction pictographs using the same materials and techniques known to be used in creating the prehistoric pictographs (thanks to **Nori Thorne!**) are being analyzed to try to determine if the pictographs are being degraded by the road dust from visitors and passing ATVs and if so, how quickly. There are study panels at several locations in Palatki and Honanki. This is an ongoing very long study and is particularly tedious to do the analysis.

Fine Incised Petroglyph Study:

(This project has been written about in more detail in earlier editions of Branching Out so I’ll give a much abbreviated description here.) It has been discovered that the Verde Valley contains a large concentration (both

in quantity and overall size) of petroglyph panels that are densely covered by very fine incised petroglyphs. These petroglyphs have gone unnoticed for a very long time due to the very fine nature of the lines, many are above current eye level, many are repatinated, close proximity to (or underneath) larger more recent pictographs. A small very dedicated/fanatical team has been working on this project for several years to capture and process the detailed images as well as view/analyze/trace/annotate (using a personal computer) the images. A square foot of panel can have many hundreds of lines crossing it in a variety of geometric and seemingly random patterns. The work to date has been constrained to multiple locations at Palatki. There are many other sites where this style of petroglyph has been noted (now that we know what to look for). This project has been done in collaboration of academics and computer specialists from Massachusetts and has resulted in several scientific papers being written for and presented at ARARA (American Rock Art Recording Association) meetings the past two years. The first paper is expected to be published in March. Final drafts are available for anyone who is interested.

The “Fine Incised Petroglyph Study”, dust study, and site photography projects are continuing, but have been slowed down by weather and a variety of other factors.

If you are interested in helping with these projects, or would like more information, please contact **Spence Gustav** at spencehg@yahoo.com.

Remote Site Photo Monitoring Project

This 1-2 person project places and maintains cameras at non-managed sites with particularly high value pictographs and petroglyphs and/or are at high risk due to ongoing frequent visitation or have recently received a lot of publicity on social media with a corresponding large surge of visitors.

We continue our remote camera monitoring and have modified camera placements to maximize their deterrent effect. We have added another camera (now two) at the Loy Pictograph Site and put a new camera at a popular social media archaeology site in Boynton Canyon (i.e. the “Subway”) that is experiencing high visitation and unfortunately, visitor graffiti.

Cultural Resources

Additionally, with permission from the CNF, **Scott Newth** is working with an independent Prescott archeologist, who has access to the Prescott National Forest pXRF device, to test local pictograph paints to determine mineral compositions and their variations in paint recipes. The pXRF is a portable X-ray device that is a non-destructive technology that measures chemical elements in detail. **Spence Gustav**, with his geology background, is participating with chemical results interpretation.

Docent Program

Historically, we have had a “Docent Refresher” event about every other year. This is a full or half day gathering of all available docents for a series of talks and Q&A with the CNF Forest Archaeologist (Peter Pilles) and RRRD Archaeologist and/or other subject matter expert. The last one was held 2018 and has been long deferred due to COVID. We had a Refresher event on February 1st that was attended by 18 docents. The event featured several Rock Art presentations by **Peter Pilles** and one on

Presentation Principles by **Nick Massoni** (RRRD Heritage Site Tech). The presentations were recorded and placed online for viewing by those who could not attend (or were locked out – OOOOPS).

We are always in need of new docents, particularly if you spend all or part of the summer months in the Verde Valley! Training is scheduled whenever we have members interested in the program.

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) for more information.

Jerry Walters (928) 284-1339

In Memory of

Eloise Baldauf

Lost to us on January 4, 2023

*Friend member since January 2009 she was Membership
chair 2011 - 2012*

*We will miss her beautiful smile, contagious laugh and
loving spirit*

Air & Water Quality

Even though the weather has caused us to miss a few filter changes at Ike's Backbone, we are still doing what we can to help out. Fossil Creek will be closed once again from February 27th through May 25th for road maintenance, but Reba McCracken was able to get us permission to go on Tuesday mornings. I got to work with Bill Logan, one of our new volunteers, this week. He is seen sweeping the shed in the first photo.

I have been working with scientists from the USFS and ADEQ on a special project at Fossil Creek. They are doing a two year study on how humans impact the water quality in the creek. Friends of the Forest-Sedona provided the funds for a new water probe that will be used specifically for that project. One of the ADEQ

scientists is seen in the second photo placing the probe in the cold water.

If anyone would like to volunteer for the water monitoring program, please contact me. We will begin collecting and processing water samples in Oak Creek from May through October. We are in desperate need of volunteers!

Happy Hiking!

Cynthia Malowitz

Chair - Water Monitoring and Air Quality



Trail Maintenance & Construction

Fay Canyon trail reroute



Ernie DiMillo and Jeff Maust. The reroute moved the trail out of the wash.

New signs Munds Mtn. Wilderness



We had to hike back there with log, post sign and tools. Rod Cashin, Pete Malmgren and Pat Quinn with Matt and Charles of the Forest Service. We replaced 3 signs and 2 poles. Kurt Starbuck, Glen Kingsbury and Bill Wilcox hiked to the furthest spot and installed the 4th sign and post.

Mescal Trailhead fence work



FOF MEMBERS L to R: Sam Serrill, Mike Boyd and Ernie DiMillo

Rebuilt rock cairn



L to R: Holly, Sam, Rod Cashin, Glen Kingsbury and Dale Smrz.

Trail Maintenance & Construction



Special project along Vultee Road was completed Friday 2/18/2023. Kurt Starbuck, Glen Kingsbury, Rod Cashin, Ernie DiMillo, Sam Serrill, David Terrell, Jim White, Rich Spinelli, Jerry Checchia and Pat Quinn, along with Forest Service personal Matt & Charlie. We built log worm fencing along the road where OHV 's were going off road and tearing up forest land. We worked with Pink Jeep on not blocking any of their overlooks for picture ops.

TM&C Chairs - Pat Quinn and Glen Kingsbury



Kiosk work at Vultee Road



FOF: Chase, Jerry Checchia, Rod Cashin, Kurt Starbuck and Ernie DiMillo



Trail Maintenance & Construction

Trail Signs

Jim Starkey, who has been creating the trail signs for the Forest Service, is no longer able to do so. Friends of the Forest has taken on that task. This involves using sign templates and routing out the letters and arrows, painting the letters, routing off the sides and corners, sanding and staining.

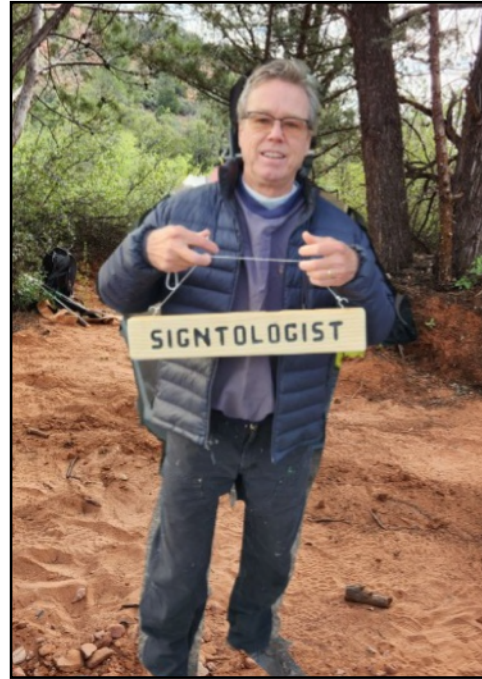
FoF received one sign-making template from Jim Starkey and purchased another. Currently, Jerry Pepiora and Ernie DeMillo have been using the templates and routing out the letters. The signs are then given to Rod Cashin to cut to size, paint the letters, route the edges and corners, sand and stain.

Through the years, the Forest Service has been purchasing the redwood planks needed for the signs and I believe their intent is to continue to do so. Forest Service has also been purchasing the black paint for the letters, the stain/sealant and all the installation hardware.

Special Thank you to Jim for keeping everyone on the right trails for all these years!!

Rod Cashin

New FOF Signtologist



Rod Cashin has taken over sign duties from Rich Spinelli

Trailhead Beautification

The new Trailhead Beautification (THB) committee officially started working on trailheads in mid-February with cleanup activities at the Bell Rock TH. The focus of the committee is to cleanup and make the trailheads look as spectacular as the rest of the area. This means:

- Removing brush and other plants around the walkways, roadways and parking lot
- Picking up trash around the TH
- Remove leaves, branches and other debris in the walkways and roadways
- Fixing damaged fencing and other simple maintenance issues in the TH
- Notifying the Forest Service of larger issues that they will need to resolve

There are 16 trailheads near highways 179, 89A and Dry Creek Road that we are starting with. Others may be added over time and with sufficient support from the FoF. Right now we are focused on the trailheads in most need of work and eventually we

will transition to visiting each one at least monthly to maintain the effort.

Ashley Hillis is our contact person with the Forest Service (FS). She has provided tools and equipment to help beautification that are stored strategically at Bell Rock, Mescal and Encinoso trailheads. This includes gas-powered weed trimmers and blowers, branch loppers, trash pickers, brooms, rakes, gloves and garbage bags.

This committee is a great way to help beautify the area and help the Forest Service without having to walk for miles. We can always use more volunteers! If interested please express that through the FOF website or by contacting me at thb@focsedona.org.

Dale Smrz

dale.smrz@focsedona.org
(773)241-2258



River Ranger Support

Tis the season – at least for our River Rangers! We've been doing our normal put-ins at Beasley Flats and take outs at Horseshoe Reservoir. With the recent rains and snows it's quite impressive to see the Verde at high flows and the reservoir full (or nearly so).

The FoF River Rangers Support team continues to volunteer for every mission. We've even added another driver – many thanks to Barb Heffner, who now has her government driver's license and joins her husband, Les, as the 2nd couple on our team. Brian and Marilyn Painchaud have been active in this effort for several years.

The crews assisting the Forest Service over the past couple of months have been manned by JTY (Jerry the Younger) – or should I report this as President JTY!, Les & Barb Heffner, Warren Holm, Jim Manning, Dave Kennedy, Brian and Marilyn Painchaud, Pat Quinn, Bob Beltz, and me (JTE). A few other regulars have been traveling or have had scheduling conflicts.

On one trip, in addition to the regular River Rangers – Nate, Jesse, and Brian, we were joined by our District

Ranger, Amy Tinderholt. We took extra care to make sure that she remained in the raft, not in the river. Helping to make sure her boss didn't get wet, Francisca Adrian (Assistant Recreation Program Manager) was also present at the put in. Think we all did our jobs. See photos. Hope you enjoyed the trip, Amy.

These attached photos show recent put in's at Beasley Flats and take outs at Horseshoe.

For any FOF members who would like to join us, please contact me at riverrangers@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. Our season will end in another month or so, any new member will probably not have a mission until the fall.

Hope everyone is staying healthy.

Jerry Piepiora - Chairman

