



# Branching Out

March 2024

Sedona Friends of the Forest

From the President

Marching along,

It feels like so much has happened since our last newsletter but I'm going to try and cover as much as I can.

### FS Updates:

**Amy Tinderholt** is changing gears and moving onto another position, I wish her all the best in new position, she has been a pleasure to work with and will be missed. **Alex Schlueter** (current Deputy District Ranger) has agreed to serve as Acting District Ranger until the position is filled permanently. You got this Alex!! **Wendy Peterman** will be the Acting Deputy District Ranger of the Red Rock Ranger District! Her first day in office should be March 11th and her detail should run until early July. **Toni Salazar** is back as our Permanent Volunteer coordinator and is really looking forward to connecting with all the members and the various projects we have going on. Good to have you back! We finally have an Archeologist back on the district, **Dana Brown** started last month and hit the ground running, he has been hands on and working closely with **Spence, Jerry Walters and Jim White**. Welcome to the Red Rocks Dana!

### Kudos Section:

I would like to give a BIG shout out to **Peter Damski & Dawn Castiglione**. They are the current site hosts at the **Crane Petroglyph Heritage Site (V-V)** and have made a generous donation of a solar powered heater/AC for the shed near the site. They also purchased some supplies to repair the floor in the shed. **Ernie Dimillo & Bill Logan** stepped up to do the repairs and install the solar panels, thank you both!! The whole project was kickstarted by **Peter and Cynthia Belowski**, thank you again for all your efforts to make that happen.

### Awards Section:

I am excited to announce that our Water Monitoring team has won the ADEQ Environmental Ambassador

award for our work on Fossil Creek and Oak Creek. Congrats to **Cynthia Malowitz** and the entire team for all their dedication with this ongoing project!! Some of us will be attending the award ceremony in Phoenix on 2/29.

I would also like to congratulate Jim Starkey as both a Gold Medal recipient of the Annual President's Volunteer Service Award *as well as* a Lifetime Chief's Award for accruing well over 1,000 service hours as a volunteer! Way to go Jim!!!

### This & That:

Once again we are assisting the FS with the Cathedral Rock Closure. The closure will be every Wednesday - Saturday from February 28th thru April 13th. Volunteers will be working in two shifts each day from 8am - 12:30pm and 12pm - 4:30pm. Volunteers will typically rotate between the Trailhead and the junction of Cathedral and Templeton. Please sign up for a shift or two. Reach out to me or Melissa if you have any questions.

Janie Projects are in full swing, if you love being outdoors and working with plants and wildlife please reach out to **Annie Glickstien**, she loves keeping everyone busy.

MER, the newest committee has also been very busy installing log worm fencing and hydroseeding, reach out to **Mike Boyd** if you're interested in helping out.

V-Bar-V Archaeology Discovery Days is being resurrected after 6 years with a new name: "**Beaver Creek Heritage Days**". The event name change corresponds with the formal renaming of the site to **Crane Petroglyph Heritage Site**. This event will take place March 16 & 17, reach out to **Jerry Walters** if interested.

## From the President

The River Rangers wrapped up another successful season under the leadership of **Jerry Pepiora (JTE)** and **Becca Miller (FS)**. Jerry will be stepping down as chair after 3 years, Please consider taking over chair of this much needed committee.

There's so much more but I have to save some for the next newsletter. Thank You to everyone for all your time and talents that you give to the Friends, I am so proud to be a part of this great organization!!

Lastly the THB committee has also been ramping up. Led by **Dale Smrz** and **Ashley Hillis (FS)** they did a huge clean up at Bell Rock TH and now have Courthouse in their sights, please reach out to Dale if you're interested.

I almost forgot about the 30 year celebration coming up on April 6<sup>th</sup> at Chavez Crossing Campground, keep an eye out for that email sign up that should be coming out soon. Thanks to everyone that was on the planning committee.

## Jerry Checchia & Chase

### Wildlife, Fish, Rare Plants

#### Fencing:

You might think that nothing gets done during inclement weather, we all shut ourselves indoors and wait until the sun shines on us, right? – Wrong. We may have cancelled some activities, but that didn't stop us. Janie and volunteers were clicking away on their computers. You should see the maps and information behind the scenes. Absolutely incredible. We even had great fence modification days in the cold drizzle and mud!

One fence modification workday we had so many workers, we got twice the expected work completed! We modified a little under 0.5 mile of bottom wire on the dilapidated Bill Gray Experimental Plot fence.

Janie has the BEST office!



The assembly line - Rob, Pat, Linda and MunYee



Margaret, David, and who's hiding behind those trees? Look at this hill, if you can see through all the brush!



## Wildlife, Fish, Rare Plants

One project after another was selected and sent to the appropriate Forest Service staff and interested volunteers. All of these projects are in the works. Watch for Signups as need because some may take quite a few volunteers:

- Treating English Ivy Tx at Thompson Property
- Hydromulching at Soldier's Pass
- Sonoran Desert Toad Inventory
- Child's Powerplant Graffiti Paint-over
- Prototype for Mesh Pump Box
- Well Plates for eDNA Analysis
- Cold Stratification
- More Bat Boxes

Janie's "flurry" of emails



If you haven't sent in your interests/preferences, please go ahead send them to me. Janie has a shared spreadsheet with all of her projects for FY24 and I enter the volunteer names into the proper categories so it makes it nice and easy for her. That way, if it is a project that only requires two volunteers, we don't have to send it out to 149 volunteers – saves on emails.

For example, Bat Boxes. Only two volunteers were needed for this project and I'm glad we got the right two! Dave and Judy Kennedy were able to finally get the bat roost boxes installed on the lower bridge girder at West Fork. The actual installation was quick and easy, it just took them several tries to decide how best to do it.



**Dave Kennedy** maneuvers a bat roost box over the railing on the footbridge over Oak Creek at West Fork Trail. The box is one of two that Dave and Judy installed on February 13. The boxes were constructed by a local girl scout troop. **Photo by Judy Kennedy**

This photo shows both of the bat roost boxes installed by the Kennedys on the lower bridge girder at West Fork Trail. Photo by **Judy Kennedy**



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## Wildlife, Fish, Rare Plants

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**TRAINING:**

- Janie did one-on-one training with Johnny Johnson on various stuff – agave, exclosure, Arundo photo retakes, etc.
- Jerry Walters was great and trained Sherry MacDonald on lichen collection and then she picked up a lichen kit
- Riparian Area Monitoring Training
- Peregrine Falcon Training
- iNaturalist Training
- March 6<sup>th</sup> Janie will be training Palatki hosts and docents on how to watch for bats out there.
  - Of course, that's after she's out with us on a fence work day
- April 2<sup>nd</sup> Janie will be leading a hike for Carol and Bob Does' Trail Ambassador Committee (previously Trail Patrol). Location TBD and it will be a morning hike.
- The one training she hasn't done and wants to get back to is the Agave Inventory training, so be on the lookout for that one.

If you are interested in becoming a Co-Chairperson for this committee, please let me know. There is obviously plenty of work so good organizational and communication skills are a priority. See you out there!

## Annie Glickstein

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## Air & Water Quality

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The Air Quality and Water Monitoring teams have been busy this winter. We have had an abundance of help from the part-timers. We will certainly miss them when they leave. The most exciting news is that the water team won the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality Ambassador award for our work on Oak Creek and Fossil Creek. An awards ceremony was held in Phoenix on February 29<sup>th</sup>. The USFS and our volunteers work with Arizona state

officials as well as scientists and engineers at UC-Davis and Northern Arizona University.

If you get a chance, hike to the big waterfall in Fossil Creek. It's one of the rare times you can have it to yourself. The scenery is spectacular throughout the area. Hopefully there will be another super bloom like last year. The yellow poppies usually appear in the Fossil Creek area around the end of March. It's certainly worth the drive.

## Cynthia Malowitz

Air & Water Quality

**Jerry Checcia and Chase**  
are changing air filters at Ike's  
Backbone.



**Kelly Gardner & Sherry  
McDonald** at Sally May in  
Fossil Creek.



**Cynthia Malowitz**  
collecting water samples  
for E.coli testing.



ADEQ's Environmental Ambassador Award



Luisa Galindo, Cynthia Malowitz, Jessica Baldischwiler  
and Pat Quinn

With **Bob Beltz and Les Heffner** completing the final pickup at Horseshoe yesterday, our team has, once again, completed another successful season on the River!

With 340 hours of support logged in since early fall, **Brian, Jesse, Nate, and Kyle** have all moved on to the Salt River for the spring season.

What was most amazing about this season is that at no time were we really pressed to find additional drivers. Notices were sent and more often than not more volunteered than actually needed.

The 17 members were always there. We probably had more schedule changes than in previous years, but it never affected the turnout.

SO – Many, many thanks to this entire team for an extremely well done job! I am most proud to be one of you.

**NOTE: As to my future, this concludes my third year as chairman of a one year promise to Adrian. Time to move on to other FOF challenges.** Fortunately, we have several months before we begin again, so there is ample time to find a replacement.

Best of luck to all.

Jerry Pepiora (JTE)

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## PSAR

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**An opportunity to have a significant, immediate, and rewarding impact as part of the Red Rock Ranger District “Preventative Search and Rescue - PSAR” efforts.**

The Friends of the Forest PSAR program was initiated several years ago in response to area first responders (Copper Canyon Fire, Camp Verde Fire, Sedona Fire, Sedona Police, Sheriff’s Dept., Verde Search and Rescue and the Forest Service) being overwhelmed with assistance calls to “The Crack” on Bell Trail off FS 618 in the Rimrock area. This locale had become a focal point for those seeking a natural summer swimming experience. To quote one internet site, “This 7-mile out-and-back hike will reward you with a rad swimming hole to cool off and perfect your cannonball. 'The Crack' is a cliff jumper's dream, but it also offers something for everyone, with smooth rocks for sunbathing and shallow waters for wading...”. It became a magnet drawing unprepared hikers in mid-summer heat. Friends of the Forest took on educating hikers of the challenge from Memorial Day to Labor Day weekends. In 2022, we added Dry Creek Vista parking area access to Devils Bridge trail to our PSAR efforts.

“The Crack” draws locals as well as day trippers from Phoenix and beyond during the summer months. The hike is down in the Verde Valley with very little shade and rock walls to reflect heat - summer temperatures exceed 100 degrees with ground temperatures as high as 150 degrees. Many individuals do not appreciate the distance and extreme exposure to sun/heat resulting in many individuals not being prepared with adequate water and sun/heat protection for themselves and/or their pets. The result – in the past, overwhelming calls due to dehydration, heat

exhaustion and heat stroke. Devils Bridge is a shorter but even more popular hike, drawing two to three times the people, many dogs and families with small children and similar exposure to the environment. Many Devils Bridge hikers are even less prepared than those at “The Crack” and the presence of children and dogs makes our efforts even more important.

As a PSAR Team member, you will share your knowledge and experience informing hikers of what they are taking on, what they should have to be appropriately prepared and to offer them alternative destinations. Our experience – we have been met with enthusiasm and appreciation. A significant percent will go get more water or choose an alternative destination and those heading out are more aware of the environment and their personal condition. Bottom line, PSAR is having an impact serving the hiking public and local first responders.

This is a great way to spend time with fellow FoF members sharing knowledge and experience, telling stories and just getting to meet others with similar interests while providing a valuable service. Please consider joining our efforts – respond to me letting me know of your interest and I will add you to the PSAR update list. Training will likely be late April/early May. Hikes to “The Crack” and Devils Bridge will also be offered to those not familiar with the trails and interested in first-hand experience.

Looking forward to volunteering with you,

[dale.evans@fosedona.org](mailto:dale.evans@fosedona.org)

Dale Evans

### **Docent Program**

We have another new docent to add to the fold. Please join me in welcoming **Dierdre Peterson**. Special thanks to **Wayne Swart**, and **Spence Gustav** for conducting the Palatki portion of the training.

We are always in need of new docents, particularly if you spend all or part of the summer months in the Verde Valley! Seasonal residents are wholly welcomed (and needed) too. 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/Crane** sites, consider joining the Cultural Resource and Protection Committee. Please call or email (docents@fosedona.org) for more information. Our FAQ is also available online:

<https://www.friendsoftheforestedona.org/activities/cultural-resources-protection/> (See the "Click HERE for answers to common..." paragraph.

### **Cultural Site Photo Documentation Project**

Photo Team is slowly getting back to being busy.

Teams are being formed to rephotograph areas of Palatki and Honanki that are showing signs of cracking. These areas are rephotographed periodically to help gauge the rate of deterioration. Unfortunately, we have had several rock falls in association with rock art in recent years. Some have been anticipated and watched over time while others occur without noticeable prior signs.

The lichen impact study on petroglyphs at V bar V with ASU lichenologist Prof. Frank Bungartz has resumed with a new round of detailed

photography at the site. The high magnification 3-D models are very impressive.

<https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/fs2373-v-bar-v-lichen-impact-panel-6-e316f96913734931a7ea3b9774b6f570>

Additional "assist" projects for 3-D photography of historic and prehistoric sites in the Kaibab NF and in/around Flagstaff are anticipated once the weather warms and snow melts in those higher elevations.

The Dust Study at Palatki and Honanki has reached a new phase and new methodology is now being initiated.

Please contact **Spence Gustav** at [spencehg@yahoo.com](mailto:spencehg@yahoo.com) if you have any questions or would like to join his team.

### **March 2024 – Beaver Creek Heritage Days**

The "annual" Archaeology Discovery Days (aka V-Bar-V Days) event held in March of each year has been on hiatus for six years. It is just days away on **March 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>**. The event is being planned and sponsored as a joint effort between Verde Valley Chapter of the Arizona Archaeological Society (VVC/AAS), Verde Valley Archaeology Center (VVAC), and the Coconino National Forest (with the support of FoF as per usual). The name of the event is being changed to coincide with renaming the site to "**Crane Petroglyph Heritage Site**" as first noted in the Sept. 2022 Branching Out. There will be a name change ceremony with **Stewart Koyiyumptewa** (Director of the Hopi Cultural Preservation Office) at 10:00 AM on Saturday morning.

Many thanks to those who have already volunteered. This event could not go on without you! There are still a few positions to fill, so you still have time.

Jerry Walters



# Trail Maintenance & Construction

Snow and rain were the major events for Trail Maintenance & Construction so far this year as we had multiple projects cancelled due to weather. We were, however, able to get out to work, on Chuckwagon, Woods Canyon, Wilson Mountain, Dogie, and Jim Thompson trails. **Kurt Starbuck** was our MVP making all five of these projects.

The TM&C Sign Crew kept busy as well. An order was completed for signs in the Fossil Springs area including signs for the newly named Dixon Lewis Trail. There is an ongoing effort to replace worn or damaged signs and to repair or replace missing signs.

## Glenn Kingsbury, Pat Quinn, Rod Cashin

**Steve Galginaitis and Rod Cashin with Holly Barbush Cliche (USFS)**



New Chuckwagon Cairn



Replacement Sign



**Kurt Starbuck** working with his pick on Chuckwagon



More replacement signs



# Trail Ambassador

It's been a busy three months on the trails and learning together!

As of this writing, we have 188 Trail Ambassador volunteers. Since January 1, we collectively have hiked over 1700 hours. We have submitted 73 maintenance reports, and we have engaged with over 20% of people encountered.

We are in the process of changing our name from "Trail Patrol" to "Trail Ambassador". This came up in the survey, and the new name more accurately describes what we do on the trails. There are a lot of "behind the scenes" things to be changed, and we appreciate **Allen Glickstein, Steve Lakowski and Ed Bustaya** for all of their work.

Trail Ambassador led hikes have included some less used trails, including Scheurman, Aerie/Cockscomb and Rabbit Ears Loop. We appreciate Margie Terrell volunteering to lead some of these! Hikes to orient new members and answer questions have been held monthly, and these will continue.

**Al Cornell, Peg Kern, Alan Kropiewnicki, Mike Vitek and Frank Wirkus** lead a map and compass orienteering course. Twenty-four Trail Ambassador volunteers attended. The first part of this course was learning about different maps and how to use compasses. We then went on map and compass journey off of Beaver Creek Road, where we used what we learned in the field. In February, a Caltopo orientation session was held for those that attended the first session.

**Charlie Schudson** led a hiking comfort and safety course. This was a combination of patio talks at Charlie's house, and on-the-trail mini seminars using the Adobe Jack trail system. The snow made this even more special!

We have worked with **Kevin Kuhl** to get "You are here" stickers, and have lots of Trail Ambassador volunteers putting them on Forest Service trail maps. The response has been positive from volunteers and people we meet on the trails.

## Carol Dores

Map and Compass Orienteering Class



Lead by Al Cornell and VSAR

Hiking Safety & Comfort class



Aerie & Cockscomb hike



Lead by Margie Terrell

**A message to all new and active volunteers regarding the Red Rock Pass, volunteers who contribute 16 or more hours can request a Red Rock Pass. The request process is outlined below. Thank you.**

If you already have the [America the Beautiful Pass](#), then you do **not** need a Red Rock Pass.

<b>Requirements</b>	16 FOF volunteer hours for the fiscal year October 1 <sup>st</sup> through September 30 <sup>th</sup>
<b>How to Request a Red Rock Pass</b>	If your current pass will expire at the end of the month, [or you never had one] then send an email to <a href="mailto:annie.glickstein@fosedona.org">annie.glickstein@fosedona.org</a> [see sample below]
<b>What do I need to do when requesting a pass</b>	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.
<b>What will happen next</b>	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 <sup>th</sup> of each month.
<b>What if you never had a Pass</b>	Same procedure as if your pass was expiring.
<b>What if I request a Pass after the 14<sup>th</sup> of the month</b>	Your request will be processed the following month along with that batch of requests
<b>What do I HAVE to do when I receive my Red Rock Pass</b>	You MUST sign and return the acknowledgment form that will be mailed to you along with the Red Rock Pass.
<b>What if I requested the pass and I did not get it by the end of the month?</b>	Email <a href="mailto:annie.glickstein@fosedona.org">annie.glickstein@fosedona.org</a> 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*

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## Graffiti Removal Team

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The Graffiti Removal Committee continues to be very active. We had a number of successful outings.

We made a trip to Cathedral Rock. Literally hundreds of scratches were removed during

our outing. We also had an outing to Devil's Bridge. Not only a popular hiking destination, but a popular spot to scratch your name, etc. So there were lots of scratches to clean off.



Cathedral Rock



Devil's Bridge



Paint graffiti continues to be a problem in our area. Sometimes we can remove the paint with an environmentally friendly paint remover. For example, here we used our 'elephant snot' at the White Bridge Picnic Area



There are other times when it just doesn't make sense to use paint remover and we paint over the graffiti. This is typically done over graffiti on concrete. We use recycled grey paint we obtain for free from the Coconino County Recycle Center in Flagstaff. Here's an example from the new bridge over the Pumphouse Wash up in the canyon.



📍 Graffiti App Tip: Plan your local hikes using the Graffiti App. It's easy to find Assigned Reports which you can remediate while you're out on the trails!

A big thanks to the committee members that were able to attend our outings. Also, thanks to committee members that continue to work independently on reporting and remediating graffiti. We now have 116 members!

Everyone be careful out there and enjoy our forest.

Jim White

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## Membership

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Our membership as of February 25, 2024 is 658. Since the Fall 2023 newsletter 62 new members have joined Friends of the Forest (note, there was no membership report in the Winter 2023 newsletter):

**Johnny Johnson, Michelle Swahla, Janet Hillock, Alyssa Lovell, Perlo Lovell, Evan Sager, Kimberly Sanchez, Athena Ramirez, Jane Kohalmi, Mike Ryan, Sandy Ryan, Steve Kohalmi, Hanna Tomaszek, Ann Burkhart, Patrick Burkhart, MunYee Aldrink, Myron Aldrink, Camille Cox, Matthew Cable, DeeDee Brewer, Deidre Jordan, Richard Jordan, Les Gerloff, Janet Alexander, Brian Neville, Gary Thie, Derek L Wlodarski, Julie Martin, Terry Martin, Jennifer Dezelan, Gregory Yori, Jennifer Yori, Susan Cable, Kathy Kinsella, Chris Seeholzer, Karinsue Miller, Matt Miller, Denise May, Alex May, Brian Hatch, Erika Hatch, Carol Culian, Nick Culian,**

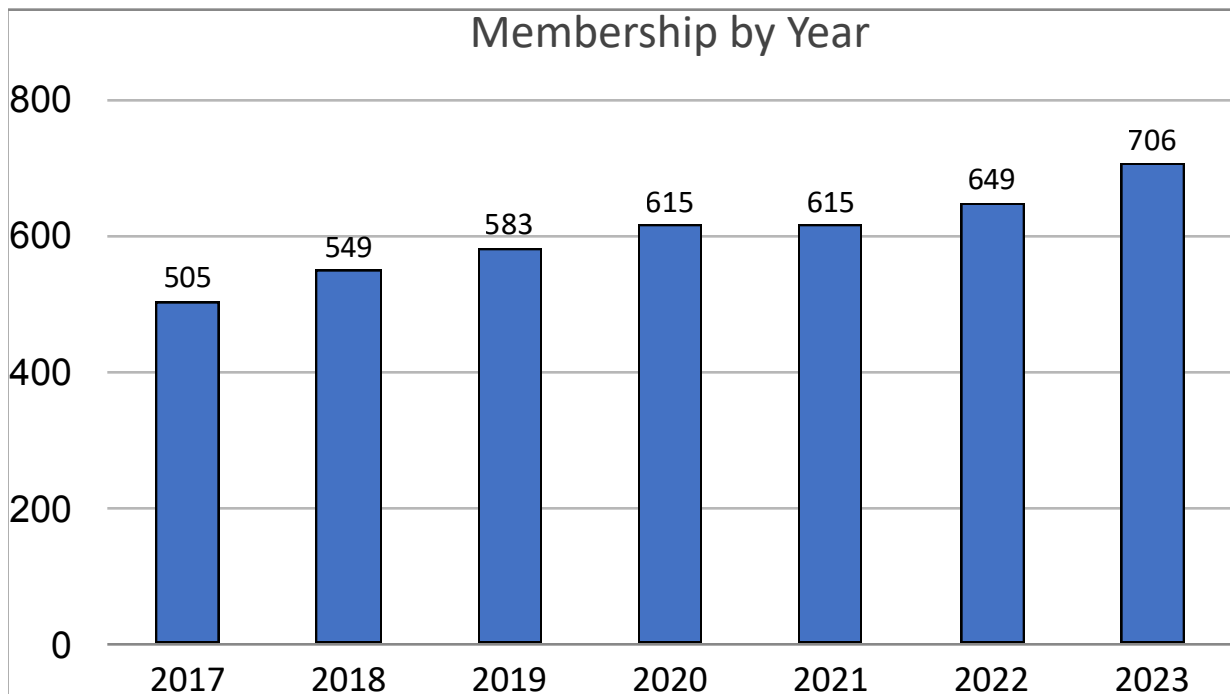
**John Hill, Lynne Hill, Mark Wrisley, Sonya Wrisley, Teddi Lavey, Kathy Nelson, Kelly St Clair, and Steve St Clair, Pamela Wunningham, Wade Wunningham, Ellen Taylor, Lafayette Bartlett, Linda Stitzer, Karl Steiner, Jan Deverman, Michelle Lilly, Andy Christenson, Linda Bellacicco and Todd Jenkins. WELCOME!**

Our final renewal communication for 2024 memberships has been sent. If you're one of the 60 members who haven't yet renewed your membership for 2024, please consider doing so ASAP, as you won't be able to volunteer without doing so.

Karen Yook

# Membership

FOF Membership Data as of Feb 25, 2024 (using calendar years)				
		Annual	Life	Total
2024	New Members Added Since Dec 31,2023	8	3	11
	Past Members not Renewing for 2024	60		
	Current Membership as of 02/25/2024	200	457	657
2023	New Members Added in 2023	53	32	85
	Past Members not Renewing for 2023	61		
	Current Membership as of 12/31/2023	252	454	706
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



## INTERPRETIVE &amp; EDUCATION

Just a little update from the Interpretive and Educational Programs committee.

We have been offering bi-monthly hikes and walks since October 2023 and only had to cancel one bird watching walk in February due to the weather. The public's interest in these programs is good. If any of you would like to join in any of these hikes/walks, please check [www.FriendsoftheForestSedona.org](http://www.FriendsoftheForestSedona.org) and click on EVENTS at the top of the page for more information. We have one Geology Hike planned in March and 2 bird watching walks each in March and April. A sincere thank-you is extended to FOF members **Kevin Harding** (bird watching walks) and **Barry Mallis** (geology hikes) for the time they spent preparing and leading their walks.

In April we hope to offer our wildflower walks again, we are looking forward to those since the weather will be warmer and our damp spring should bring out lots of variety. It ALWAYS amazes me, how many different flowers like to bloom in our high-desert. **Bob Beltz** will be leading these hikes.

We are looking for a few talented people who would like to share their passion and expertise with our fellow FRIENDS and visitors. We would

love to have members who have photography skills who would like to lead a class in how to get great photos of the Red Rocks with cell phone or camera. There are visitors who would enjoy knowing the best ways to capture that iconic photo for their friends and family back home. Options for classes are in a classroom setting at the Red Rock Visitors Center in their meeting room or on the patio outside.

Other options are to present a classroom talk, 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). All programs are subject to review and approval by the Forest Service.

We will also be assisting the Forest Service with the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday party of Smokey Bear in August. More information later. If you can help us, please contact me at [www.interpretive@friendsoftheforest.org](mailto:www.interpretive@friendsoftheforest.org).

May the forest be with you . . .

Bea Logan

Sedona Friends of the Forest  
Branching Out  
Jean Ober, Editor, [newsletter@focsedona.org](mailto:newsletter@focsedona.org)